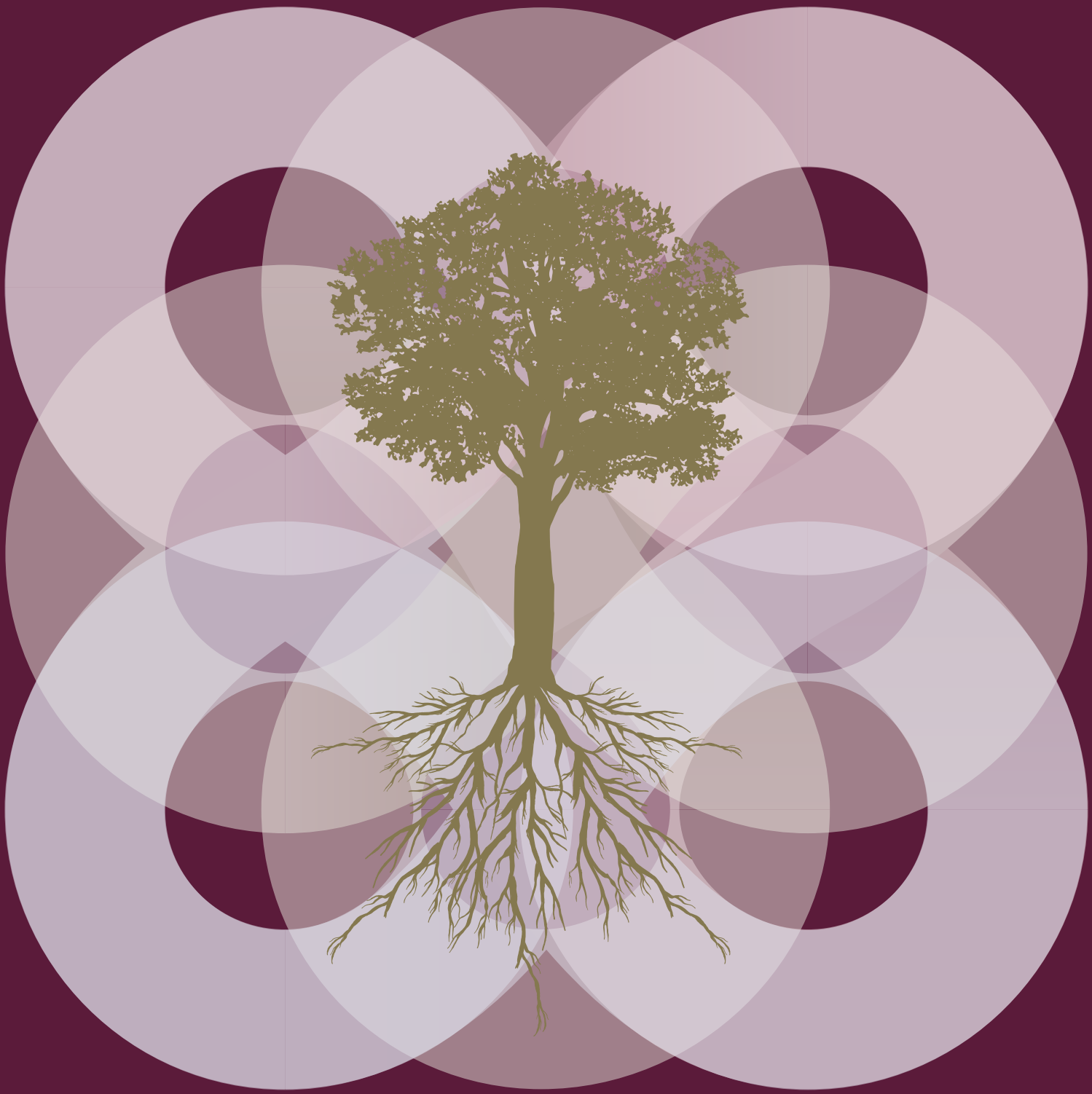
# Strategic Character Preservation Area Design Standards and Guidance

Laura Lee +

eiw

01 SEPTEMBER 2026
FINAL REPORT V2



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and abroad, and their continuing connection to culture, community, land, sea and sky. We pay our respect to Elders and Knowledge Holders and express gratitude for their continued sharing of knowledge and culture.

## Image Credit

All images sourced from Barossa Australia, including photographer Dragan Radocaj


## EIW Architects

**Adelaide**
**U1/45 Gilbert Street**
**Adelaide SA 5000**
**+61 4 2265 8202**

**Perth, Australia**
L12, 109 St Georges Tce
Perth WA 6000
+61 8 9484 4700

hello@eiwarch.com.au
www.eiwarch.com.au

## Susan Powell

Architect, M.Arch
EIW Principal
Adelaide

susan@eiwarch.com.au

## Chloe Summers

Architect, M.Arch
EIW Director
Perth & Adelaide

chloe@eiwarch.com.au

## Laura Lee

Architect, Hon FRAIA
Professor
Belgium & Italy

llee@cmu.edu

## Stevie Summers

Senior Designer, MVisArtDes(Graph)
Stuart Pettigrew Design
Melbourne & Gold Coast

stevie@spdesign.com.au

# Acknowledgements

This report has been informed by the knowledge, experience and generosity of many individuals who contributed their time, insights and perspectives throughout the project. The process brought together representatives from local and state governments, industry, community organisations, residents and technical disciplines, creating a rich conversation about the future of character preservation in the Barossa.

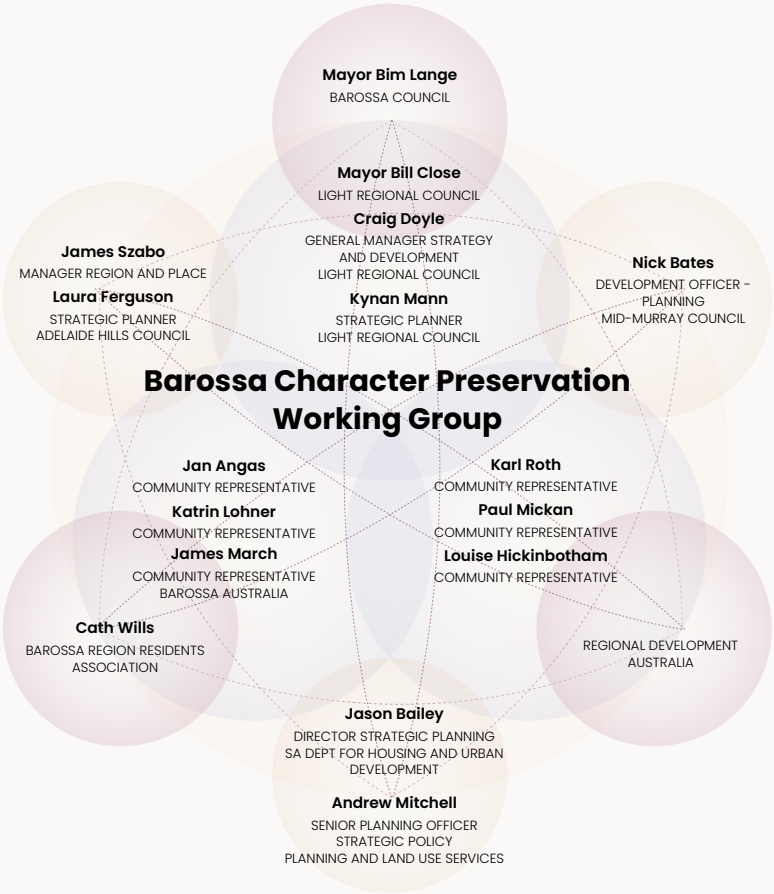
The authors acknowledge all those who participated in workshops, discussions, interviews and review processes. Their contributions have helped shape a framework grounded in both the enduring values of the Barossa and the opportunities that lie ahead.

**Martin McCarthy**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Jake McVicar**
DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Tom Marshall**
BAROSSA PRESERVATION AREA PROJECT LEADER
SENIOR GROWTH AND STRATEGIC PLANNER

**Aaron Curtis**
SENIOR MANAGER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



**Executive Summary** 5

**1. Objectives** 12
1.1 Aspirations 16
1.2 Challenges 17
1.3 Opportunities 18

**2. Literature Review** 20
2.1 Barossa Preservation Evolution 24
2.3 Key Themes 26
2.3 Emerging Strategic Threads and Considerations 29

**3. Planning** 30
3.1 Understanding the Planning Context 33
3.2 Legislative Purpose and Strategic Interpretation 34
3.3 Character as a Planning Consideration 35
3.4 Character in the Planning and Design Code 36
3.5 Strengthening Character Preservation 37
3.6 Character in a Contemporary Context 38
3.7 Emerging Tensions and Considerations 39
3.8 From Legislative Purpose to Character-Led Planning 44
3.9 Reviewing Character Preservation Now 47

**4. Approach** 48
4.1 Leading Practice and Innovation 52
4.2 Define, Align, Design 53
4.3 Design, Planning, Development 54
4.4 Translation, Transition, Transformation 55

**5. Mission Mapping** 56
5.1 Barossa Tastings 62
5.2 Barossa Pairings 63
5.3 Barossa Blending 64
5.4 Barossa Portrait (Doughnut Economics) 66

## 6. Strategic Directions 68

6.1 Growing a Living Region 72
6.2 Barossa Planning at Scale 75
6.3 Barossa Planning as a System 76
6.4 Design for Belonging 77
6.5 Design for Contribution 78
6.6 Design for Collective Action 79

## 7. Character Framework 80

7.1 Character Framework 83
7.2 Understanding Regional Character 84
7.3 Translating Evidence into Character 85
7.4 Understanding Character 86
7.5 Hierarchy of Character 88
7.6 Character Questions 89
7.7 Establishing a Shared Character Language 90
7.8 Regional Character Statements 92
7.9 Landscape Character Statements 98

## 8. Design Principles and Testing Framework 106

8.1 Applying Character in Planning 112
8.2 Building on Established Planning Principles 112
8.3 Developing The Testing Framework 113
8.4 The Testing Framework 114
8.5 Applying the Testing Framework 114
8.6 Testing Frameworks 115
8.7 Applying the Framework in Practice 123
8.8 Character as Enduring Capacity 131
8.9 Design Advisory Guide 134

## 9. Ways Forward 132

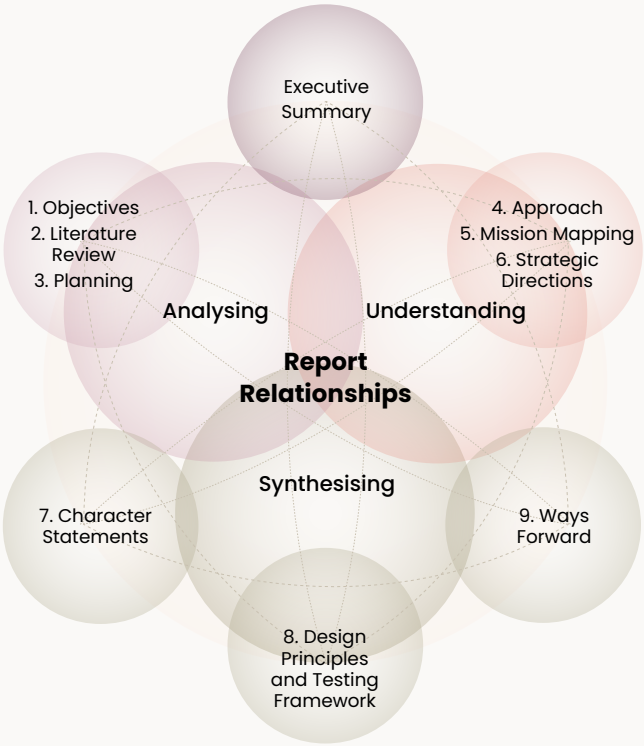
9.1 Regeneration Framework 136
9.2 Innovation Infrastructure 137
9.3 Actions and Four Horizons 137
9.4 Barossa 2050 143

## 10. Appendices 144

Appendix – Core Literature Review

# Executive Summary






## A Living Document

This report is intended to be read as a living system rather than a linear document. Like the Barossa itself, every section is connected, each informing and strengthening the others. The constellation above maps these relationships, allowing readers to navigate freely between analysis, understanding and synthesis according to questions they are exploring.

The knowledge contained within these pages is the product of extensive collaboration between the Working Group, Councils, State Government and the design team. While interpreted and structured through design, the ideas, insights and aspirations are genuinely shared, making this report a co-created foundation for the Barossa's future.

The report offers a framework for ongoing learning, stewardship and decision-making. It invites curiosity, reflection and constructive challenge. As new knowledge emerges and the region evolves, these frameworks can evolve with it.

This report represents more than the completion of a commission. It establishes the foundations for a framework that can continue to evolve through implementation, testing and refinement. With the leadership demonstrated by the Barossa Council and the collective wisdom of the Working Group, the region is uniquely positioned to become Australia's benchmark for character-led regional planning.

And this is not the final version of the Barossa's story. It is the first iteration of a shared space—designed to grow through continued participation, strengthen with every contribution, and support a shared commitment to stewarding one of Australia's most distinctive regions for generations to come.

# Executive Summary
## Growing a Living Region

The Barossa is recognised nationally and internationally for its distinctive landscapes, productive vineyards, heritage settlements and enduring sense of place. These qualities have not endured by remaining unchanged, but because successive generations have adapted the region with care, balancing environmental stewardship, economic prosperity and community identity.

Today, the Barossa faces new opportunities and pressures. Population growth, housing demand, tourism, climate adaptation, agricultural change and infrastructure investment all require planning decisions that respond to contemporary needs while preserving the qualities that make the region distinctive. This presents a fundamental planning challenge, not whether change should occur, but how it can strengthen rather than diminish regional character.

The Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 provides a strong legislative foundation for recognising the Barossa as a place of State significance. South Australia's broader planning system contains general policy supporting character, landscape and design quality, however, there is an absence of detailed policy and shared framework that connects planning mechanisms into a consistent understanding of regional character.

Rather than proposing a new layer of planning policy, this report strengthens the interpretation of the existing planning system. It provides a practical framework that helps planners, councils, applicants, designers, decision-makers and the community understand how regional character is created, how it evolves over time, and how it can be considered confidently through planning decisions.

The report demonstrates that regional character is not defined by individual buildings or isolated planning policies alone. Instead, it emerges through the ongoing relationships between landscape, settlement, productivity, heritage, community, governance and stewardship. Recognising these relationships enables planning decisions to move beyond managing individual development proposals towards actively cultivating the long-term qualities that define the Barossa as a living region.

## Analysing

### 1. Project Objectives

The project began by asking a fundamental question:

*How can the Barossa continue to evolve while maintaining the qualities that make it distinctive?*

Working collaboratively with the Barossa Preservation Area Working Group, the project sought to develop a strategic framework that supports confident decision-making, strengthens existing planning processes and provides practical guidance for managing future change. Rather than resisting growth, the project explores how well-considered development can reinforce the Barossa's identity, resilience and prosperity.

### 2. Literature Review

A comprehensive review of Australian and international research confirmed remarkable consistency across contemporary thinking about landscape, place and regional identity. While terminology varies across disciplines, successful regions increasingly recognise that environmental, cultural, economic and social systems operate together rather than independently.

These findings established the intellectual foundation for the project, demonstrating that protecting regional character requires more than regulating individual development. It requires integrated thinking that recognises the relationships between landscape, productivity, heritage, community and governance.

### 3. Planning Framework

The review of South Australia's planning system found that strong legislative and policy foundations for character already exist through the Character Preservation Act, the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act, State Planning Policies and the Planning and Design Code.

Rather than identifying gaps in policy, the project identified an opportunity to strengthen how these planning mechanisms are interpreted collectively. The framework developed through this report complements existing statutory processes by providing clearer reasoning, shared language and a stronger connection between strategic intent and everyday planning decisions.

## Understanding

### 4. Collaborative Process

A defining strength of this project has been the way it was developed. Through extensive collaboration with the Barossa Preservation Area Working Group, representatives from State Government, Council, industry and the community contributed local knowledge, professional expertise and lived experience throughout an iterative process of discussion, testing and refinement.

This collaborative approach ensured that the framework reflects both contemporary planning practice and the values of the Barossa community, creating genuine ownership of the outcomes and a stronger foundation for future implementation.

### 5. Mission Mapping

Mission Mapping translated extensive research, policy analysis and stakeholder knowledge into visual frameworks that explored the relationships shaping regional character.

Rather than viewing landscape, settlement, productivity, governance and community as separate topics, these exercises demonstrated how they interact as interconnected systems. This process established a shared understanding of the Barossa's defining qualities and helped transform complex evidence into practical strategic directions.

### 6. Strategic Directions

The Strategic Directions represent the central recommendations of the project. Rather than prescribing fixed solutions, they establish a clear pathway for embedding character across planning, governance, design and regional decision-making.

Together they encourage innovation, collaboration and adaptive implementation while ensuring that future growth strengthens the landscape, economy, environment, cultural identity and long-term prosperity of the Barossa.

## Synthesising

### 7. Character Statements

The Character Statements translate strategic intent into a shared language for understanding place.

Developed through extensive evidence and collaboration, they articulate the defining landscapes, settlement patterns, heritage values and community characteristics that collectively express regional identity. Together they provide a consistent reference point for planners, designers, decision-makers and the community, strengthening confidence in planning decisions while recognising that character continues to evolve.

### 8. Testing Framework and Design Guidance

The Character Assessment Framework represents the practical application of the project.

Rather than introducing additional regulation, it provides a transparent and repeatable method for interpreting regional character within existing planning processes. By encouraging broader consideration of landscape, stewardship, identity, productivity and community values, it supports better professional judgement, clearer decision-making and more consistent planning outcomes.

The framework is intentionally adaptable, enabling it to evolve alongside changing community expectations while remaining grounded in the enduring qualities that define the Barossa.

### 9. Ways Forward

The Ways Forward establish a practical pathway from strategy to implementation. Structured around immediate priorities, medium-term initiatives and long-term opportunities, they identify actions for embedding character across governance, planning, design and regional leadership.

Rather than concluding the project, they recognise that character preservation is an ongoing process of stewardship, learning and adaptation. The framework is intended to evolve alongside the Barossa itself, supporting informed decision-making well beyond the completion of this study.

### Onward

The Barossa has inherited an extraordinary landscape shaped through generations of custodianship, enterprise and community. This project demonstrates that protecting this inheritance does not require choosing between preservation and growth. Instead, it proposes a more integrated path where development actively strengthens the qualities that make the region distinctive.

By combining statutory planning with systems thinking, regenerative design and collaborative stewardship, the framework equips Council to make decisions that are both practical today and enduring tomorrow. It represents an investment not only in better planning, but in a culture of stewardship capable of carrying the Barossa's character, prosperity and identity confidently into the future.

### Status of This Report

*This report is a foundational and reference document. It does not constitute planning policy, nor does it establish a new statutory assessment pathway. It provides an evidence base, shared framework and strategic foundation from which future policy may be developed. Any statutory application will require a subsequent policy translation phase, undertaken collaboratively by the Councils and State Government, to test, refine and translate the report's findings into appropriate planning policy and implementation mechanisms.*

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

# 1. Objectives



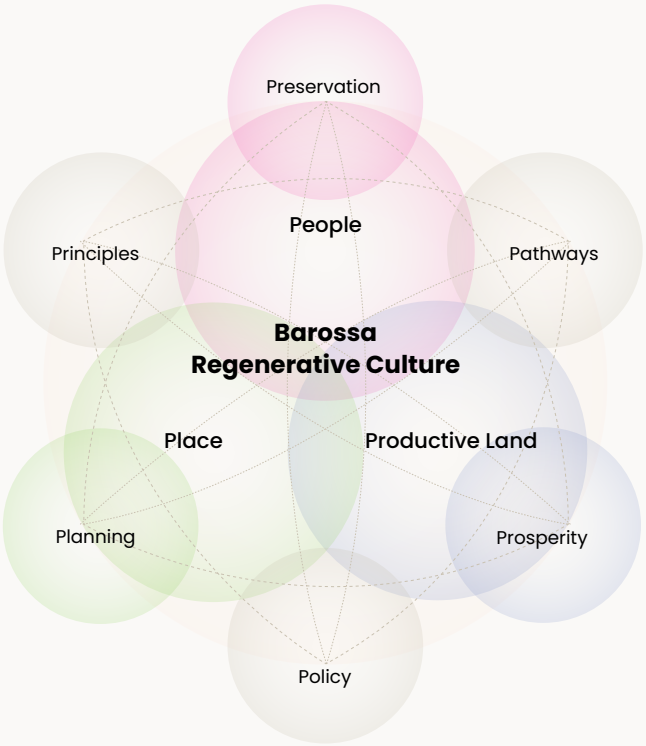



## 1. Objectives

1.1 Aspirations
1.2 Challenges
1.3 Opportunities

## 2. Literature Review

## 3. Planning




## Evolving with Integrity

The Barossa has always been a connected, empowered and healthy system - a constellation - in motion.

Its landscapes, townships, industries and communities have evolved over generations, shaped by the enduring relationship between people, place and productive land. The qualities that define the Barossa today are the result of continual adaptation, stewardship and shared responsibility.

**Through this work, we seek to position the Barossa as a leader in character-led regional development—demonstrating how growth, investment and change can contribute to the long-term enrichment of place rather than its erosion.**

We see the Barossa as a living landscape.

A landscape where **heritage** is expressed through generations of stories, knowledge and experience.

A landscape where **character** is reflected not only in buildings and places, but in identity, values, traditions and cultural narratives.

A landscape where **preservation** is achieved not by resisting change, but by guiding change with clarity, purpose and integrity.

This work seeks to bridge aspiration and implementation.

It explores how high-level values, regional identity and long-term stewardship can be translated into practical guidance, planning frameworks and collective decision-making. It seeks to establish clearer pathways for how character is defined, interpreted, balanced and defended as the region continues to evolve.

**At a time of increasing growth pressures, changing economic conditions and emerging environmental challenges, the Barossa faces an important question:**

*How do we protect what matters most while enabling the change needed to support future generations?*

**Our aspiration is to move beyond perceived tensions between:**

- heritage and innovation
- preservation and development
- regional identity and economic prosperity
- qualitative character outcomes and quantitative planning controls

**And instead establish shared principles that ensure:**

- change is enabled and guided, not resisted
- development contributes to place rather than diminishes it
- character is preserved, expressed and strengthened over time
- future generations inherit a recognisable and enduring Barossa

**The Central Question**

*How can the Barossa remain globally admired, locally liveable and economically resilient while continuing to evolve with integrity?*

# 1. Introduction

The Barossa is recognised as one of South Australia's most distinctive regional landscapes. Its character has been shaped through the long-standing interaction of environment, productive land, settlement patterns, heritage, tourism, industry and community identity. The region's distinctive qualities are not defined by any single element, but by the cumulative relationship between landscape, culture, agriculture, built form and lived experience over time.

The Barossa's evolution has been influenced by its unique history, including early settlement patterns, agricultural development, cultural traditions and internationally recognised food and wine industries. Equally important has been the ongoing stewardship of local communities, whose commitment to place has helped shape and maintain the character of the region across generations.

As the region continues to evolve, it faces increasing pressures associated with growth, housing demand, tourism, economic change, infrastructure investment and environmental sustainability. These pressures create both opportunities and challenges for how the Barossa's distinctive character can be maintained and strengthened into the future.

The Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 established an important legislative framework for recognising and protecting the region's special character. While the Act established the intent and principles of character preservation, further work is required to translate these high-level objectives into contemporary planning, policy and decision-making frameworks.

This project contributes to that next phase of work.

The project seeks to better understand the values, qualities and characteristics that define the Barossa and to explore how these can be reflected through future planning policy, design guidance, assessment processes and strategic decision-making. It is grounded in the principle that character preservation is not intended to prevent change, but to guide change in ways that reinforce the qualities that make the Barossa distinctive.

The work is informed by a shared aspiration that:

- the distinct identity of the Barossa continues to be recognised and strengthened
- communities remain connected, resilient and economically sustainable
- productive landscapes continue to support agriculture, viticulture and associated industries
- townships retain their individual character, scale and sense of place
- growth and investment respond to local context and regional values
- environmental systems, water resources and landscape quality are sustained for future generations
- future generations inherit a recognisable and enduring Barossa landscape

The project explores how **preservation, planning** and **prosperity** can operate together to support the long-term future of the region.

These three themes provide a framework for understanding how character can be protected, expressed and strengthened while supporting a thriving, adaptable and resilient Barossa.

### Vision in the Context of Aspirations, Challenges, Opportunities

The following challenges were identified through Work Group engagement, particularly the initial meeting. Just as WG members expressed a strong aspiration to preserve and strengthen the Barossa's distinctive character, they also recognised a range of strategic, economic, social and planning challenges that will influence how these aspirations can be realised over time.

## 1.1 Aspirations

### A Shared Vision for The Future

#### 1. Articulating and Protecting Barossa's Distinctive Identity

We emphasised the importance of clearly defining and communicating the Barossa's special character through place-based character statements. This is viewed as fundamental to reinforcing the region's identity, supporting its reputation, and providing a clear basis for future planning and design outcomes. The relationship between landscape, productive land, settlements and heritage is consistently identified as a defining characteristic of the region that should be recognised and protected.

#### 2. Protecting Landscape Character and Sense of Place

We recognised the importance of the Barossa's landscape setting as a fundamental component of its identity and character. The relationship between agricultural land, historic settlements, open rural landscapes, vineyards and scenic views was understood as contributing to the region's distinctive sense of place. There is support for future planning and design initiatives that preserve these landscape qualities while accommodating appropriate growth and change.

#### 3. Strengthening Community Stewardship and Intergenerational Understanding

The importance of building a shared commitment to character preservation across the region is widely recognised. We identified opportunities to improve community awareness of the historical, cultural and economic significance of the Barossa's character and to strengthen understanding of its value for future generations. Particular emphasis is placed on engaging younger people and fostering a stronger connection between the region's heritage, identity and future opportunities.

#### 4. Embedding Community Values in Future Planning Outcomes

We highlighted the importance of ensuring that future planning and design frameworks reflect community expectations regarding character, development and place identity. Planning policy, assessment frameworks and design guidance should be informed by local values and lived experience, providing confidence that future development will respond appropriately to the qualities that are most valued by the community.

#### 5. Character-Led Strategic Planning

A key aspiration is the establishment of a long-term vision for character preservation that can guide future strategic planning, policy development and implementation. We identified the need for a clear framework that informs planning policy, statutory mechanisms and design guidance, ensuring that future growth and change reinforce the distinctive qualities of the Barossa while supporting the region's long-term objectives.

#### 6. Delivering Practical and Enabling Planning Tools

We expressed strong support for planning controls and design guidance that are practical, accessible and capable of supporting high-quality development outcomes. Future tools should clearly communicate expectations, provide certainty for applicants and decision-makers, and respond to the operational realities of agricultural, tourism and business activities. There is a clear preference for measures that enable appropriate development while reinforcing character.

#### 7. Integrating Character and Economic Prosperity

There is strong support for planning approaches that recognise the interdependence between character preservation and economic success. Future policy and guidance should support development that contributes positively to the character of the region while maintaining opportunities for investment, innovation and economic growth. We emphasised that character outcomes must be achievable within commercially and operationally realistic settings to ensure their long-term effectiveness.

#### 8. Balancing Preservation, Growth and Economic Diversity

A recurring theme is the need to achieve an appropriate balance between preserving the qualities that define the Barossa and accommodating future growth and change. We discussed the importance of balancing the needs of agriculture and tourism, recognising the contribution of wine while supporting other industries, and ensuring that economic diversification can occur without diminishing the attributes that underpin the region's identity and reputation.

#### 9. Recognising Wine as Part of a Broader Cultural Landscape

We consistently described wine as one element within a broader and interconnected regional ecosystem. Wine was seen as intrinsically linked to agriculture, food production, gastronomy, tourism, heritage, industry and community life. This perspective reinforces the importance of understanding character through the relationships between these elements rather than viewing them as separate sectors. In this context, wine was often described as an entry point to a broader story of place, culture and landscape that collectively defines the Barossa.

## 1.2 Challenges

**Considerations for Achieving Vision**

### 1. Maintaining Distinctive Township, Rural and Landscape Character

We highlighted the importance of preserving the unique identity of individual townships, rural landscapes and agricultural areas. As development patterns evolve, there is a risk that the characteristics that distinguish different parts of the region may become less apparent. Maintaining local distinctiveness while accommodating change was identified as an ongoing challenge for future planning and development.

### 2. Responding to Cumulative Change and Incremental Impacts

We recognised that character is often affected by the cumulative impact of many small changes over time rather than by individual developments alone. Concerns were raised regarding the gradual erosion of landscape character, settlement patterns and rural qualities through incremental development, infrastructure expansion and land use change. Understanding and responding to cumulative impacts is identified as an important long-term consideration.

### 3. Building Community Confidence and Adaptive Governance

We expressed concerns regarding consultation fatigue and community scepticism arising from previous planning and policy initiatives. There is a strong view that future work must clearly demonstrate how it differs from earlier processes, how previous engagement outcomes have been considered and how implementation will occur. We also highlighted the importance of establishing mechanisms for ongoing review, adaptation and continuous improvement to ensure that future planning responses remain relevant and effective as circumstances change.

### 4. Balancing Certainty, Flexibility and Character Outcomes

A recurring challenge is balancing the need for clear and consistent planning controls with the inherently complex and place-based nature of character. We noted that many aspects of character are difficult to measure through conventional planning standards, including landscape relationships, transitions, cultural associations, identity and sense of place. Planning frameworks must ensure that they provide certainty while still allowing for context-responsive decision-making.

### 5. Translating Strategic Character Objectives into Contemporary Planning Frameworks

We identified challenges associated with ensuring that longstanding character preservation objectives continue to be effectively reflected within contemporary planning frameworks. The transition from previous Development Plan structures to the Planning and Design Code has altered the way planning policy is organised, interpreted and applied. As a result, there is an ongoing need to ensure that strategic character objectives are clearly expressed and consistently considered through development assessment processes.

### 6. Managing Growth and Development Pressures

Ongoing population growth, investment and tourism activity continue to generate pressure for change across the region. We identified challenges associated with accommodating growth while maintaining the qualities that contribute to the Barossa's identity and character. Areas of concern include land use transition (such as conversion of rural allotments), township expansion, infrastructure provision, built form outcomes and increasing desire for visitor accommodation.

### 7. Supporting Economic Resilience and Diversification

We discussed broader economic pressures affecting the region, including cost-of-living challenges, workforce retention and changing conditions within key industries. While wine remains a defining component of the regional economy, there is recognition that economic diversification may be necessary to support long-term resilience. The challenge identified is how to accommodate new economic opportunities while retaining the industries, landscapes and cultural attributes that contribute to the Barossa's identity.

### 8. Maintaining Housing Affordability and Community Continuity

Housing affordability is as a significant concern, particularly in relation to the ability of young people and families to remain within the region. We identified challenges associated with rising housing costs, limited housing supply and increasing strain placed on residential housing stock by change of use to short term visitor accommodation. There are concerns that these trends may reduce opportunities for younger generations, affect community continuity and alter the social fabric of the region.

### 9. Balancing Tourism Growth with Rural Character Preservation

While tourism continues to play an important role in the regional economy, we identified challenges associated with managing tourism-related development within rural areas. Particular concerns were raised regarding large-scale developments on rural lands, large-scale function centres on relatively small land parcels, the proliferation of short-stay accommodation and the potential for incremental fragmentation of productive agricultural land and valued landscapes. We noted that tourism growth should be managed in a manner that does not diminish the rural character and landscape qualities that underpin the region's appeal.

## 1.3 Opportunities

### Pathways to Deliver Vision

#### 1. Building on a Strong Culture of Identity and Stewardship

The Barossa benefits from a strong and enduring sense of regional identity, supported by a community that values its landscapes, agricultural traditions, heritage and distinctive townships. We identified this shared understanding as a significant opportunity to strengthen future planning, policy development and community-led stewardship initiatives. The region's existing culture of stewardship provides a strong foundation for long-term character preservation and place-based decision-making.

#### 2. Recognising Landscape as a Strategic Economic Asset

We emphasised that the Barossa's landscapes provide value in addition to their scenic qualities and represent a significant economic asset for the region. The landscape underpins tourism, agricultural productivity, wine reputation, regional branding, liveability and investment attraction. Recognising and articulating this relationship presents an opportunity to strengthen the economic case for landscape protection and ensure that landscape considerations are integrated into future planning and design guidance.

#### 3. Creating a Long-Term Strategic Reference for the Region

We recognised the potential for this work to extend beyond immediate planning policy outcomes and become an enduring strategic reference for the Barossa. A broader vision document could help guide future decision-making across planning, economic development, tourism, heritage, landscape management and community initiatives. This would provide a shared framework capable of supporting future policy refinement and implementation over time.

#### 4. Developing Place-Responsive Planning and Design Frameworks

We identified an opportunity to further develop planning and design approaches that respond directly to the diverse landscapes, settlement patterns and identities that exist across the Barossa. Such approaches could better recognise local variation while remaining consistent with broader state planning objectives. This was seen as an opportunity to achieve more context-sensitive and place-responsive development outcomes.

#### 5. Leveraging Established Strategic and Legislative Foundations

We recognised that the Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012, together with previous strategic investigations and planning initiatives, provides a substantial foundation for future work. Rather than starting anew, there is an opportunity to build upon existing knowledge, policy frameworks and community engagement outcomes to develop a more integrated and contemporary approach to character preservation and regional planning.

#### 6. Strengthening the Relationship Between Character and Planning Implementation

A key opportunity identified is to strengthen the connection between strategic character objectives and the mechanisms used to implement them. This includes planning policy, assessment pathways, overlays, design guidance and future planning code provisions. We considered that a stronger alignment between strategic intent and implementation is essential to improve consistency, clarity and effectiveness in achieving desired character outcomes.

#### 7. Aligning Community Values, Planning Outcomes and State Priorities

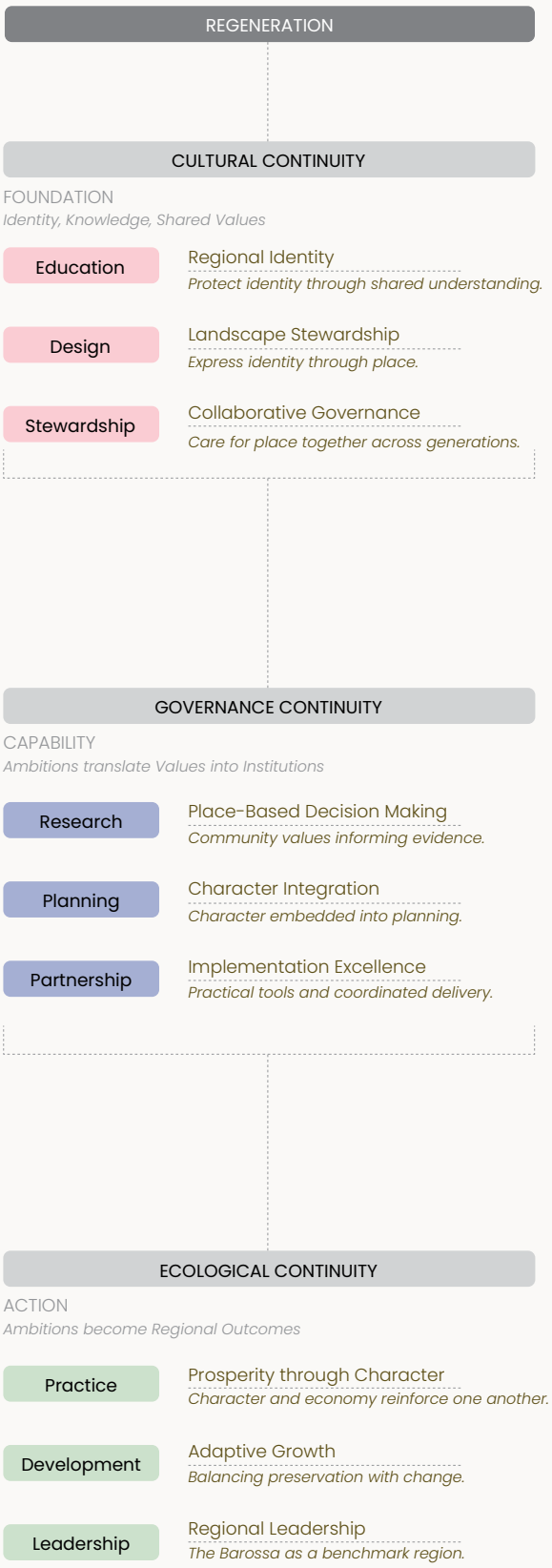
A significant opportunity identified was to strengthen alignment between community expectations, planning outcomes and broader South Australian Government priorities. We noted the potential for the Character Preservation District framework to provide a constructive platform for engagement with state government on matters including housing, regional development, tourism, economic growth and infrastructure planning. Improved alignment is seen as important for ensuring that local character objectives can be advanced alongside broader strategic priorities.

#### 8. Establishing a Leading-Practice Character Preservation Framework

There is strong support for developing a contemporary character preservation framework that integrates environmental, economic, cultural and community considerations. The opportunity exists to create a robust and enduring policy framework that responds to the unique significance of the Character Preservation District while operating effectively within the structure of the Planning and Design Code and establish a leading-practice model for regional character planning.

#### 9. Positioning the Barossa as a Benchmark for Regional Planning Excellence

We identified an opportunity for the Barossa to become a benchmark for character-led regional planning within South Australia and beyond. The work is seen as having potential relevance for other character-based regions, including McLaren Vale, and could provide valuable lessons for future planning initiatives elsewhere. There is a strong desire to move beyond discussion and deliver practical, implementable outcomes that demonstrate how character preservation, economic prosperity and community aspirations can be successfully integrated within an evolving planning framework.




## Tomorrow Together

### Stewardship and Custodianship of Character

Emerging from the discussions is the importance of stewardship and custodianship in shaping the future of the Barossa. We expressed a desire for current and future generations to act as custodians of the region's distinctive character, ensuring that decisions made today contribute positively to its long-term cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing.

This aspiration extended beyond the protection of individual places or landscapes and reflected a broader commitment to managing change responsibly. We recognised that the Barossa's character has been shaped over generations through the combined influence of agriculture, heritage, community values, landscape and enterprise. There was a shared view that future planning and development should continue this legacy by reinforcing the qualities that define the region while enabling it to "evolve with integrity" and respond to changing circumstances.

Stewardship was also linked to the importance of knowledge sharing, community participation and intergenerational understanding. We highlighted the need to foster a sense of collective responsibility for the region's future, ensuring that the values, stories and attributes that contribute to the Barossa's identity are understood, appreciated and carried forward for future generations.

### Leveraging these Aspirations, Challenges, Opportunities

The aspirations, challenges and opportunities presented in this section are intended to be read both individually and collectively.

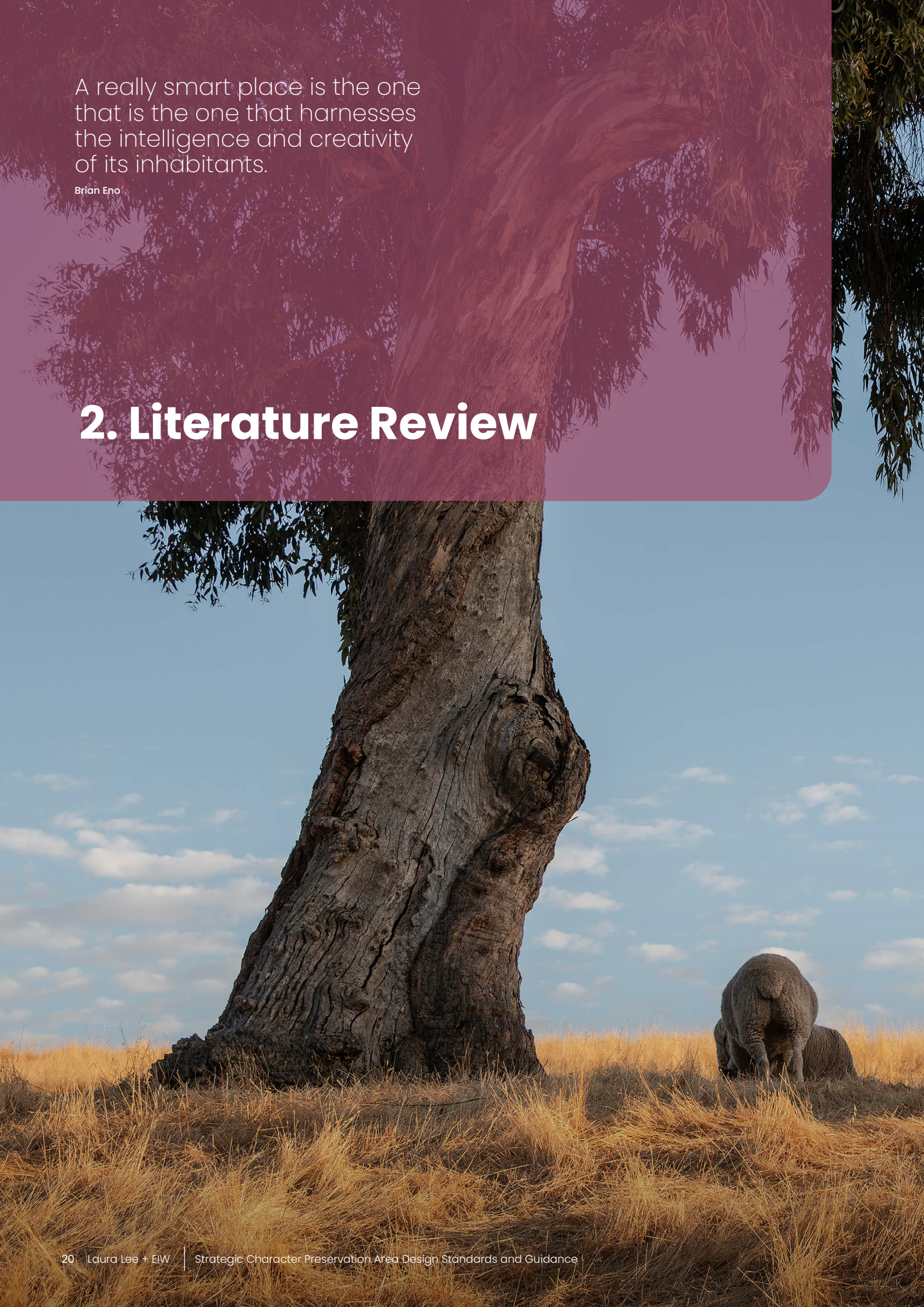
The aspirations describe the future outcomes identified through engagement with the Working Group and project stakeholders. The challenges identify the key considerations that may influence the achievement of those aspirations. The opportunities highlight pathways through which those challenges may be addressed.

While presented as separate sections, many of the themes are interconnected and should be read horizontally. Together they establish a framework for understanding the relationship between the region's ambitions, the issues that require consideration and the opportunities available to support future character outcomes.

A really smart place is the one that is the one that harnesses the intelligence and creativity of its inhabitants.

Brian Eno

# 2. Literature Review



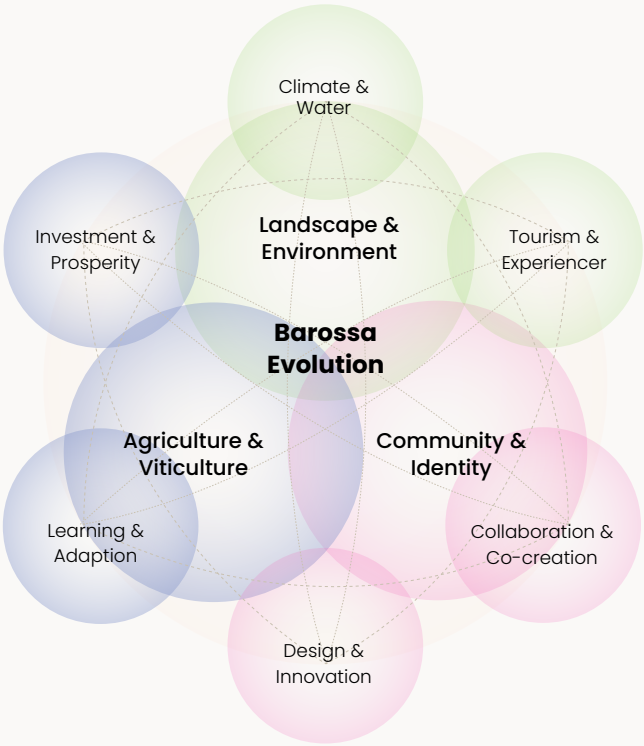



## 1. Objectives

## 2. Literature Review

2.1. Barossa Preservation Evolution
2.2 Key Themes
2.3 Emerging Strategi Threads and Considerations

## 3. Planning




## Literature Review Insights

**We begin with abundance, not absence**

The Barossa does not suffer from a lack of ideas.

Across decades, the region has generated thoughtful reports, strategies, reviews and community voices.

What emerges is not an information gap, but an opportunity gap: *to connect past wisdom into a clear future pathway.*

This project can transform accumulated insight into coordinated action.

**Five truths repeated throughout the literature**

1. CHARACTER IS THE CORE ASSET

The Barossa's value is inseparable from its landscapes, villages, agricultural beauty, heritage stories and sense of authenticity.

Character is not ornamental.

It is foundational.

2. PROSPERITY DEPENDS ON PLACE

Wine, tourism, food, investment and regional reputation all rely on preserving the qualities people value.

Economic strength and place stewardship are not opposites.

They are partners.

3. WATER SHAPES THE FUTURE

Water security appears consistently as a defining issue.

Climate variability, affordability, reliability and long-term resilience are central to future prosperity.

4. COMMUNITY IS A HIDDEN STRENGTH

Repeated references to volunteerism, local pride, philanthropy, collaboration and stewardship suggest that social capital is one of Barossa's greatest assets.

The region has capacity within itself.

5. GOVERNANCE NEEDS EVOLUTION

Many documents point to fragmentation, duplicated effort and the need for clearer coordination.

The next era of success may depend less on new ideas, and more on how leadership aligns.

**What has changed?**

Earlier conversations focused on protecting Barossa from sprawl.

Today the challenge is broader:

- housing diversity
- retaining younger generations
- climate resilience, water
- investment certainty
- tourism quality over volume
- design excellence
- coordinated governance

**The central question now**

How can Barossa remain globally admired, locally liveable and economically strong while evolving intelligently?

**The opportunity ahead**

| Cherish | Enable | Secure |
|---|---|---|
| The rural landscapes that hold memory | Prosperity that honours place | Water for future generations |
| Township identities shaped over time | New enterprises true to Barossa character | Climate resilience and biodiversity |
| Food, wine and craft traditions | Housing choices for all ages and stages | Strong governance and one clear voice |
| Heritage, stories and belonging | Tourism that deepens value, not volume | Infrastructure that serves community |
| The beauty people travel to find | Design excellence rooted in landscape | Confidence in future stewardship |

The Barossa is not a place to freeze in time.

It is a living landscape to steward —where preservation gives meaning, prosperity gives life, and foresight gives tomorrow.

# 2. Literature Review

A substantial body of character-based studies, policy development, strategic investigations and community engagement has been undertaken in relation to the Barossa over many years.

Collectively, this work demonstrates a strong and consistent recognition that the Barossa's character is derived not from a single feature or planning outcome, but from the interaction between landscape, productive land, environmental systems, settlement patterns, heritage and community identity over time.

This review consolidates:

- the seven core strategic and policy documents identified through the project scope
- 23 broader regional strategy, tourism, water, landscape, agriculture and planning material
- community-derived intelligence gathered through multiple engagement processes over time.

Please see Appendix for core review and documents list

Rather than restating previous policy positions, the review seeks to identify recurring themes, unresolved tensions, strategic gaps and emerging directions that continue to shape the Barossa today.

Across more than a decade of planning, engagement and strategic work, one of the clearest observations is that the Barossa has remained remarkably consistent in what it values. Regardless of author, timeframe or consultation process, the literature repeatedly reinforces the importance of:

- protecting rural landscapes and productive land
- maintaining township distinction and identity
- supporting viticulture, agriculture and associated industries
- recognising heritage as both built form and living culture
- balancing tourism growth with preservation of place
- ensuring the region remains economically resilient and adaptable into the future.

What becomes clear through the review is that the issue has rarely been a lack of vision or understanding of what makes the Barossa distinctive. The values themselves are generally well understood and repeatedly supported by both community and government documentation. The more persistent challenge has been how those values are translated into practical planning outcomes, development assessment and long-term decision-making.

The literature consistently highlights tensions between:

- preservation and adaptation
- flexibility and protection
- economic growth and landscape impact
- local identity and external development pressure
- strategic intent and practical implementation.

Importantly, the literature is not anti-development. In many cases, the documents actively support value-adding industries, tourism investment, agricultural diversification, adaptive reuse and long-term economic resilience. The recurring question is not whether development should occur, but how growth and change can reinforce the qualities that contribute to the Barossa's identity, productivity and sense of place.

The review also identifies a gradual evolution in regional thinking. Earlier work focused primarily on landscape protection and settlement management. More recent documents place greater emphasis on resilience, investment, climate adaptation, housing pressures, tourism, water security and long-term regional prosperity. This reflects an increasing recognition that preservation and future prosperity are not competing objectives, but interdependent outcomes.

Overall, the literature suggests that the Barossa already possesses a strong and widely supported strategic vision. The recurring gap is not identifying what matters, but consistently translating those values into practical planning tools, clearer guidance, stronger design responses and decision-making frameworks capable of responding to both current pressures and future change.

## 2.1 Barossa Preservation Evolution

Across the literature, three broad eras of thinking are visible. These are not fixed historic periods, but a useful way of understanding how the region's challenges and focus have evolved over time.

| **Foundation Era** 1993–2005 | **Protection + Brand Era** 2012–2019 | **Future & Stewardship Era** 2020–2026 |
|---|---|---|
| Regional identity | Character preservation | Tourism at scale |
| Landscape protection | Tourism premiumisation | Strategic investment |
| Growth control | Wine ecosystem | Housing pressure |
| Water / agriculture baseline | Authenticity | Preservation vs tension |

The literature shows the Barossa moving from protecting a place, to preserving a brand, to now needing to shape a more integrated future: one that can hold landscape, production, culture, investment and shared prosperity together

### Strategic Synthesis

The synthesis draws from the broader evidence base to identify recurring themes, tensions and strategic directions. It is intended to assist the next stage of work: translating character and preservation intent into usable planning, design and decision-making tools.

| Category | Literature says | Gap / tension | Why it matters | Strategic direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape + Environment** | Landscape is consistently described as one of the Barossa's defining assets. It is connected to scenic value, agricultural production, township setting, tourism identity and regional character. | Landscape is strongly valued, but the literature is less clear on how landscape should actively guide development decisions, investment, infrastructure and tourism growth. | If landscape is treated as background rather than core regional infrastructure, cumulative development may erode the asset that underpins agriculture, tourism, identity and community attachment. | Position landscape as a primary organising layer for future planning and design decisions. |
| **Community + Identity** | Community material, including the RDA mind maps and 2019 , shows strong attachment to land, continuity, shared identity and regional stewardship. | Community values have often translated into formal planning language, but some of the lived texture and local meaning has been lost in that process. | If the final character statements are not recognisable to the people who live and work in the region, they may lack legitimacy and influence. | Keep community language visible in character statements and design principles. |
| **Agriculture + Wine** | Wine is central to the Barossa's identity and economy, but the literature also shows a broader productive landscape of agriculture, food, soil, stewardship and generational landholding. | Wine is a powerful global shorthand for the region, but it can obscure other forms of agricultural production and rural identity. | If wine becomes the whole story, other productive, cultural and landscape values may become less visible in planning and investment decisions. | Frame wine as the gateway to a broader productive ecosystem, not the full extent of Barossa identity. Diversification is a critical need and undeveloped opportunity. |
| **Water + Climate** | Water appears repeatedly as a critical issue for agriculture, settlement, climate resilience and long-term regional viability. | Water is often addressed as a technical or infrastructure issue, rather than a spatial and design driver that shapes land use, growth and tourism capacity. | Water directly affects the Barossa's productive base, landscape character, economic resilience and future settlement capacity. | Treat water and climate resilience as core criteria in planning, design and development assessment. |
| **Tourism + Experience** | Tourism is positioned as a major economic opportunity, strongly linked to food, wine, heritage, landscape and visitor experience. | Tourism opportunity is well described, but the limits of scale, siting, infrastructure capacity and cumulative impact are less resolved. | Tourism can reinforce the Barossa's identity, but if poorly located or scaled, it can place pressure on rural land, housing, infrastructure and landscape character. | Support tourism that deepens place, rather than tourism that consumes place. |
| **Investment + Prosperity** | More recent documents place greater emphasis on investment, tourism expansion, economic growth and regional competitiveness. | Investment is not always clearly linked to the landscape, community, agricultural and cultural systems that create Barossa's value. | Without a clear value-based investment lens, growth may be assessed by economic opportunity alone, rather than its contribution to long-term regional prosperity. | Define investment broadly: as investment in land, culture, community, environment, production and long-term value. |

Domains not identified but critical to the strategy direction include:

- Collective Governance + Decision-making
- Code / Policy / Regulation / Legal Translation
- Data / Technology / Monitoring

## Cross-Cutting Enablers

The content domains above describe what the literature is about. The following enablers describe how those values and directions may be translated into practical outcomes.

| Category | Literature says | Gap / tension | Why it matters | Strategic direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Design and Innovation** | Character is described through landscape, settlement, heritage, rural production and town form. | The literature describes character more strongly than it translates character into design guidance. | Without design translation, character can become either too vague to defend or too rigid to enable good contemporary outcomes. | Use design as the bridge between character description and practical development assessment. The Barossa has potential to be a "deep demonstrator" of innovation. |
| **Collaboration, Communication + Collective Decision-Making** | The documents show multiple layers of community consultation, policy work, state planning, local governance and industry input. | The relationship between these layers is not always clear. Aspirations, policy, statutory mechanisms and real decisions can sit apart. | Unclear decision pathways reduce trust and make it harder for stakeholders to understand how values become outcomes. | Create clearer translation between values, policy language, assessment triggers and decision-making processes. Early and broad participation, co-creation and continuous engagement need to be established. |
| **Measurement, Evaluation, Learning Loops + Adaptation** | The literature shows repeated cycles of review, consultation and strategy over many years. | There is less evidence of a continuous learning loop that monitors whether policies and strategies are achieving the intended outcomes over time. | Without review and adaptation, the region risks returning to the same issues in another planning cycle. | Build mechanisms for monitoring, reflection and adjustment into future strategy, character work and design guidance. Value-based assessment relative to the Barossa is needed. |

## Implications for Act–Code Translation

The literature review points to a translation challenge. The Character Preservation Act provides a strong statement of intent, while the Planning and Design Code provides the mechanism through which development is assessed. The next stage of work should consider which matters require statutory expression, which require design guidance, and which sit within broader strategic or non-statutory tools.

| Likely Code / Overlay matters | Likely design guidance matters | Likely broader strategic matters |
|---|---|---|
| Character attributes | Character statements | Investment attraction |
| Assessment triggers | Built form principles | Regional identity |
| Siting and scale | Landscape integration | Tourism positioning |
| Landscape impact | Materiality and scale | Community education |
| City regional boundary | Settlement pattern | Governance and ongoing review |
| Development types with character impact | Rural edge conditions | Unity without uniformity |

## 2.2 Key Themes

The following section provides an overview of the key themes arising from previous work and identifies broader observations relevant to future planning, strategic development and character considerations.

### Landscape, Productive Land and Regional Structure

One of the most consistent themes throughout the literature is recognition of the Barossa as a working agrarian landscape rather than simply a scenic or tourism destination.

The productive landscape — including vineyards, agricultural land, rural infrastructure, open space, vegetation systems and environmental corridors — is repeatedly identified as fundamental to the region's identity, economy and visual character.

Previous work consistently emphasises:

- the importance of maintaining expansive rural landscapes and views
- the relationship between productive land and township settlement patterns
- the diversity of landscapes across the region
- transitions between townships and surrounding rural land
- the visual structure created through topography, vegetation, agriculture and movement corridors
- the significance of landscape continuity and separation between settlements

The literature also recognises that landscape character is experienced cumulatively and at multiple scales, ranging from broad regional views and ridgelines through to township edges, road corridors and individual rural interfaces.

Importantly, landscape is consistently described not as a static backdrop, but as an active and evolving system shaped through agricultural production, environmental processes, tourism activity and community stewardship over time.

Several documents also highlight the importance of avoiding development outcomes that contribute to suburbanisation, fragmentation of productive land or erosion of landscape distinction.

The review identified ongoing recognition that the Barossa's landscape structure forms part of both its regional identity and long-term economic resilience.

### Township Identity and Settlement Pattern

A second recurring theme throughout the literature relates to the distinct identity, scale and settlement pattern of Barossa townships.

Previous work consistently describes the Barossa as a collection of individual villages and townships situated within a broader productive rural landscape, rather than as a continuous urban settlement pattern.

Recurring themes include:

- strong separation between settlements
- village-scale identity
- irregular township edges
- human-scaled built form
- visual connection to surrounding landscapes
- transitions between township and rural environments
- diversity between individual settlements

The literature repeatedly identifies the importance of maintaining the distinct character of individual townships rather than encouraging homogenous or suburban development patterns.

Township identity is also consistently linked to:

- landscape setting
- street character
- scale and form of development
- historic evolution
- public realm experience
- agricultural interfaces
- movement and arrival experiences

Several documents identify concern regarding development outcomes that may weaken township distinction, create generic suburban patterns or diminish the relationship between settlements and the broader landscape.

At the same time, the literature generally acknowledges that townships will continue to evolve and accommodate growth over time, provided that future development responds appropriately to local context and reinforces existing character relationships.

The review identified broad support for growth and adaptation where responsive to place, scale and landscape setting.

## Heritage, Built Form and Cultural Continuity

Heritage is consistently identified throughout previous work as an important contributor to Barossa identity and regional character.

However, the literature generally frames heritage broadly, extending beyond individual heritage buildings to include:

- settlement patterns
- agricultural structures
- cultural landscapes
- traditional materials
- streetscapes
- public spaces
- historic land use patterns
- cultural practices and associations

The review identified repeated recognition that heritage contributes to continuity between past, present and future regional identity.

Several documents also emphasise the importance of adaptive reuse and ongoing evolution of historic buildings and sites, recognising that continued use and adaptation may contribute positively to long-term preservation outcomes.

Built form considerations appearing throughout the literature include:

- maintaining human scale
- responding to local context and topography
- integration of old and new development
- use of landscape and vegetation
- simple and durable built forms
- avoiding dominant or visually intrusive development outcomes
- reinforcing township identity and landscape relationships

Importantly, previous work generally does not advocate for the preservation of the Barossa as a static historical environment. Rather, the literature supports continued evolution while reinforcing the qualities and relationships that contribute to local identity and sense of place.

The review also identified ongoing recognition that built form alone does not define character but operates as part of a broader landscape and cultural system.

## Tourism, Economy and the Working Landscape

Tourism and economic activity emerge throughout the literature as both defining characteristics of the Barossa and important contributors to its future sustainability.

Previous work consistently identifies tourism as intrinsically linked to:

- landscape quality
- agricultural production
- wine and food industries
- township identity
- heritage and authenticity
- scenic character
- regional experience

The literature generally recognises that the Barossa's tourism economy is dependent upon the continued strength and authenticity of these underlying regional qualities.

At the same time, several documents identify the need to carefully consider the scale, location and intensity of tourism-related development in order to avoid unintended impacts on landscape character, productive land or township identity.

Recurring themes include:

- balancing tourism growth with landscape stewardship
- maintaining authenticity and regional distinctiveness
- supporting economic resilience
- encouraging context-responsive tourism development
- integrating tourism infrastructure within landscape settings
- avoiding over-commercialisation of regional identity

The review identified broad support for tourism and economic diversification where aligned with landscape character, productive land and regional identity.

Several documents also acknowledge that tourism and economic activity will continue to evolve over time in response to changing visitor expectations, environmental conditions and market demands.

## 2.2 Key Themes (continued)

### Community Identity and Sense of Place

A strong sense of community identity and regional stewardship is consistently evident throughout previous engagement and strategic work.

The literature repeatedly highlights the importance of:

- belonging and local identity
- intergenerational continuity
- connection to landscape and place
- community participation and stewardship
- lived experience
- cultural and social continuity
- pride in regional distinctiveness

Many documents identify character as something experienced collectively through daily life, landscape relationships, local traditions and community memory rather than solely through planning controls or physical development outcomes.

The review also identified recognition that different communities and stakeholders may experience character in different ways depending on their relationship to landscape, agriculture, tourism, townships and economic activity.

Despite these differences, there is broad consistency regarding the importance of maintaining a recognisable Barossa identity into the future.

Several documents also identify concern regarding cumulative change and the potential erosion of qualities that contribute to community identity and sense of place over time.

The literature consistently recognises that the Barossa contains multiple landscape, settlement and production identities, and that future planning responses may require a level of local calibration rather than a singular regional response.

### Growth, Change and Future Conditions

A recurring theme throughout the literature is recognition that the Barossa will continue to evolve in response to changing environmental, economic and community conditions.

Previous work generally does not oppose growth or change in principle. Rather, the literature consistently emphasises the importance of ensuring that growth responds appropriately to landscape setting, township identity and regional character.

Recurring considerations include:

- managing township expansion
- avoiding suburban development outcomes
- maintaining separation between settlements
- supporting economic resilience
- accommodating changing tourism patterns
- adapting agricultural practices
- responding to climate and environmental conditions
- balancing flexibility and certainty within planning frameworks

Several documents also identify opportunities for:

- context-responsive infill development
- adaptive reuse
- integrated tourism outcomes
- diversification of agricultural activity
- stronger landscape and township guidance
- improved alignment between strategic objectives and planning implementation

The review identified growing recognition that many future planning challenges will require balancing multiple regional objectives simultaneously rather than resolving single issues in isolation.

This includes balancing:

- preservation and adaptation
- growth and identity
- tourism and productive land
- economic opportunity and landscape integrity
- flexibility and long-term certainty

## 2.3 Emerging Strategic Threads and Considerations

### Emerging Strategic Themes

Review of the literature identified several recurring strategic themes consistently reflected across previous investigations, policy work and community engagement.

#### Character extends beyond built form

A consistent finding throughout the material is that Barossa character cannot be understood solely through architecture or individual heritage places. Character emerges through broader relationships between landscape, settlement patterns, agriculture, environmental systems, tourism and community identity.

#### Landscape and settlement relationships are critical

The relationship between townships and surrounding productive landscapes is repeatedly identified as central to regional identity and visual character.

Growth is generally supported where responsive to place.

The literature demonstrates broad acknowledgement that growth, investment and evolution are necessary for long-term regional sustainability, provided that future development responds appropriately to local context and reinforces character outcomes.

#### Tourism and economy are intrinsically linked to character

Tourism is consistently recognised as both economically important and dependent upon the continued strength of landscape quality, authenticity and regional identity.

#### Character is cumulative and long-term

The review identified strong recognition that character change often occurs incrementally over time through the cumulative impact of many decisions rather than individual developments alone.

#### Greater implementation clarity is increasingly important

Several documents identify the importance of strengthening the relationship between strategic character objectives and practical planning implementation mechanisms within the contemporary planning environment.

### Ongoing Strategic Considerations

The review identified several ongoing considerations likely to remain relevant to future planning, policy and strategic discussions within the Barossa context.

These include:

- balancing preservation and ongoing evolution
- supporting tourism while maintaining authenticity and landscape integrity
- accommodating growth without diminishing township distinction
- protecting productive land while enabling economic diversification
- balancing state-wide planning consistency with local character outcomes
- responding to cumulative long-term change rather than isolated development outcomes
- strengthening alignment between strategic character objectives and implementation mechanisms

Collectively, these considerations reinforce the importance of continuing to view character as a dynamic regional system shaped through landscape, economy, community, environment and planning over time.

A detailed review of source material and supporting literature is included within Appendix A and the accompanying evolving literature review documentation.

You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.

Buckminster Fuller

# 3. Planning



Photo credit: Pexel images




## 1. Objectives

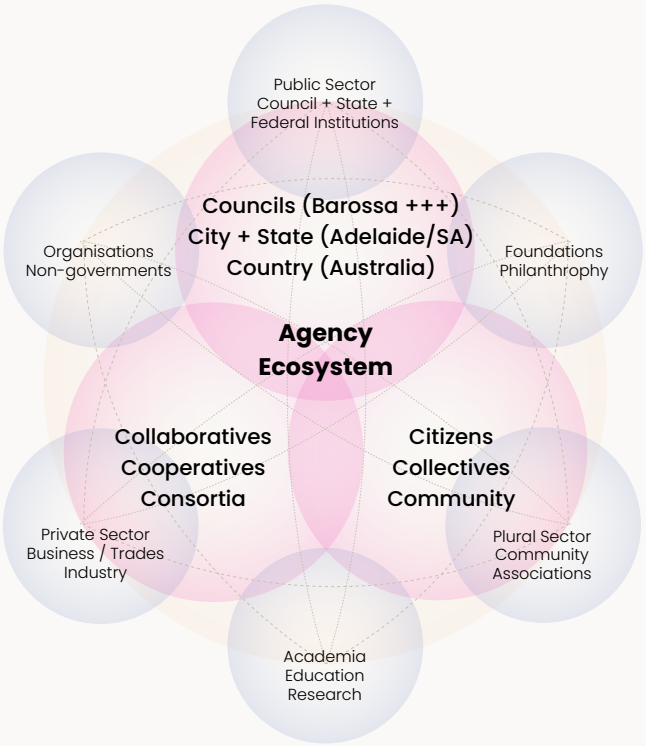
## 2. Literature Review

## 3. Planning

3.1 Understanding the Planning Context
3.2 Legislative Purpose and Strategic Interpretation
3.3 Character as a Planning Consideration

3.4 Character in the Planning and Design Code
3.5 Strengthening Character Preservation
3.6 Character in a Contemporary Context

3.7 Emerging Tensions and Considerations
3.8 From Legislative Purpose to Character-Led Planning
3.9 Reviewing Character Preservation Now




## Character Preservation as Shared Responsibility and Reward

The preservation of Barossa character is not the responsibility of any single organisation, planning policy or statutory instrument. Rather, it is the cumulative result of decisions made by governments, businesses / industry, landowners, designers, planners, developers, community organisations and residents over time.

The qualities that contribute to the identity of the Barossa—including its environmental systems, productive landscapes, township character, heritage, tourism experiences, and cultural traditions—are influenced by a wide range of actions occurring both within and beyond the planning system. Character is therefore shaped not only through development assessment, but through ongoing stewardship, investment, land management, community participation and collective design decision-making.

The qualities that contribute to the identity of the Barossa also generate benefits beyond the region itself. The Barossa plays an important role in South Australia's cultural identity, visitor economy, agricultural reputation and international profile. The stewardship of these qualities therefore extends beyond local interests and represents a broader shared responsibility across all levels of the public sector, the private sector and the community.

In this context, character preservation can be understood as a shared responsibility and a shared reward. The long-term qualities that make the Barossa distinctive can be strengthened through collective action and stewardship or gradually diminished through the cumulative impact of decisions that fail to recognise the interconnected nature of the region.

Achieving enduring character outcomes therefore requires all participants within the planning and development process to actively contribute towards a shared understanding of place.

**This includes active partnering with all of the actors illustrated above working together to ensure future change continues to reinforce the qualities that contribute to the Barossa's distinct identity.**

Character preservation is therefore not simply about regulating development. It is about creating the conditions through which future change can occur while maintaining and strengthening the qualities that make the Barossa unique. In this spirit, designers, planners and developers play an enabling role for shared prosperity of the region for the long-term.

As the following section will demonstrate, coordinating and aligning across legislation and planning codes - to name only two dimensions - will position the Barossa to achieve its highest aspirations and long-term value to the benefit of all. Nurturing these relationships, while maintaining adaptability and agility as required by challenges and opportunities will strengthen the performance of the Barossa as a system and build a leading regenerative culture.

# 3. Planning

## 3.1 Understanding the Planning Context

### Character Preservation as a Planning Purpose

At its core, the character of the Barossa is not defined by individual buildings, places or views in isolation. Rather, it emerges through the enduring relationships between landscape, productive land use, settlement patterns, heritage, environmental systems and community life. Together, these relationships create the distinctive regional identity that has earned the Barossa recognition as one of South Australia's most significant cultural landscapes.

Character preservation is therefore not about preventing change, but guiding it. Individual planning decisions may appear modest independently, yet collectively they shape the long-term evolution of the Barossa's landscapes, settlements and communities. The challenge is to ensure that change continues to reinforce, rather than diminish, the qualities that make the region distinctive.

The Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 (The Act) establishes this principle by recognising the Barossa as a place of State significance. Rather than prescribing how every development should occur, The Act defines the enduring purpose that planning policy, development assessment and decision-making seek to achieve through South Australia's contemporary planning system. In doing so, it recognises that preserving the Barossa is not simply about protecting individual places or limiting growth, but about ensuring all decisions continue to reinforce the relationships between landscape, production, settlement, heritage and community that collectively define the region's identity.

### An Evolving Planning Framework

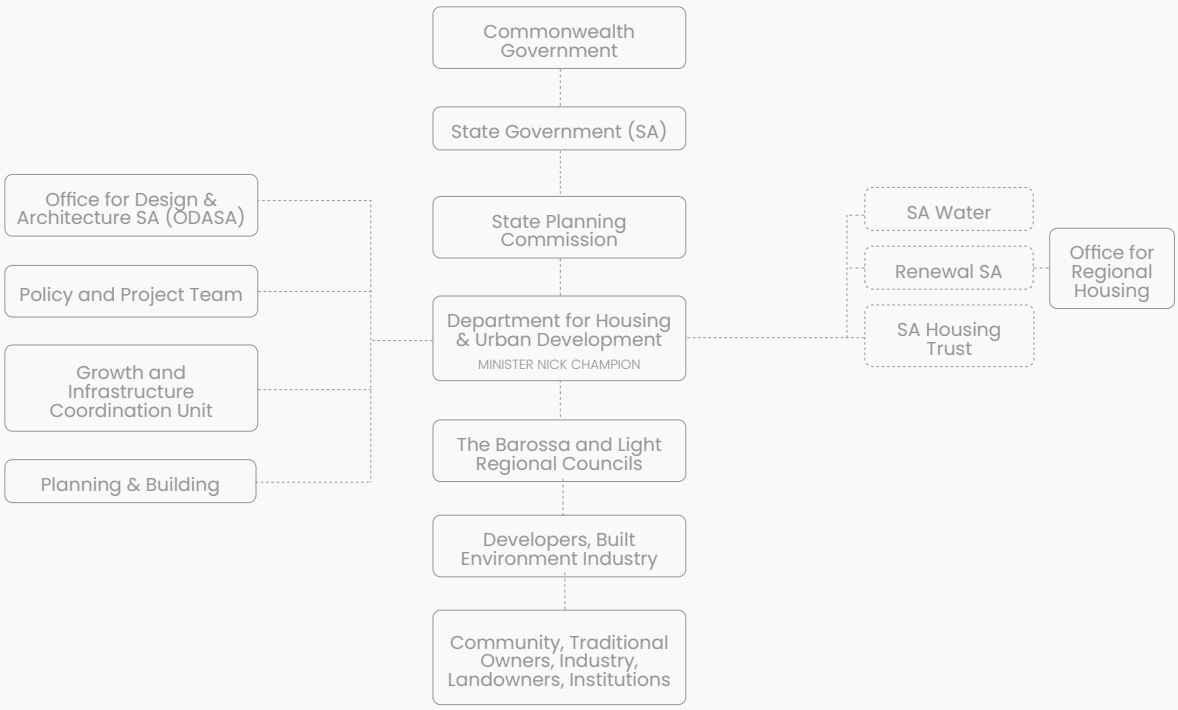
The primary mechanism for managing land use and development in South Australia is the planning system.

Since the introduction of the original Barossa preservation legislation in 2012, the planning framework has evolved significantly. Successive reforms have modernised the way planning policy is prepared, interpreted and applied through the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (The Planning Act), the State Planning Policies, Regional Plans and the Planning and Design Code.

While the planning framework has evolved, the purpose established through the Act has remained consistent. The challenge is therefore not to redefine character preservation, but to ensure contemporary planning mechanisms continue to give effect to that enduring purpose.

Understanding the relationship between such an enduring legislative purpose and an evolving planning framework provides the foundation for the sections of the report that follow. This section explains how legislative intent is translated through South Australia's planning hierarchy into planning policy, development assessment and decision-making, while maintaining a consistent focus on the long-term stewardship of the Barossa's character.

***Although the planning system will continue to evolve, the purpose of character preservation remains unchanged: to guide change in a manner that reinforces the defining qualities of the Barossa. Understanding how that purpose is translated through South Australia's planning framework is the focus of the following sections.***




Character Preservation as a Shared Responsibility

Character preservation extends beyond statutory planning and relies upon coordinated stewardship across government, industry, landowners, communities and institutions. Collectively, these participants influence the long-term character, resilience and prosperity of the Barossa.

## 3.2 Legislative Purpose and Strategic Interpretation

### Legislative Purpose

The preservation of the Barossa's character is supported through a hierarchy of legislation, State policy and statutory planning instruments. Together, these establish a clear line from legislative purpose through to planning policy, development assessment and decision-making.

At the highest level, The Act establishes the enduring purpose of preserving and enhancing the special character of the Barossa as a place of State significance. It defines why character preservation matters and provides the legislative foundation for planning within the region.

This purpose is implemented through The Planning Act, which establishes South Australia's planning system and provides the statutory framework for preparing planning policy and assessing development.

Within this framework, the State Planning Policies articulate the State's strategic planning priorities. In particular, State Planning Policy 21 – The Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 recognises the importance of identifying, protecting and reinforcing the distinctive qualities that contribute to the identity, liveability and prosperity of South Australia's regions:

*The legislation provides that the special character of the Barossa Valley is recognised, protected and enhanced while providing for the economic, physical and social wellbeing of the communities within the district. It restricts the creation of additional residential development in the rural areas of the district to halt urban sprawl to the north of Adelaide's built-up area, thereby seeking to provide for continued farming and primary production activities.*

*Planning policy should reinforce character values so that development does not detract from the special character of the district. The special character of the district should be considered in terms of the five character values identified in the legislation.*

*It is acknowledged that character is continuous, and the character of the district extends beyond the boundary defined by the character preservation legislation; however the district – (external boundaries, rural living boundaries and township boundaries) – have been defined by the legislation for the purposes of the character preservation considerations.*

*These strategic directions are translated into statutory planning policy through the Planning and Design Code, where overlays, zones, subzones, general development policy and assessment criteria provide the mechanisms for considering character during development assessment.*

*Together, these planning instruments translate the purpose of the Preservation Act into practical planning outcomes.*

### The Greater Adelaide Regional Plan (GARP)

The Greater Adelaide Regional Plan (GARP) also plays a key role. Its themes, outcomes and long-term objectives are of direct relevance to planning in the Barossa Valley.

Theme: People, housing and liveability
Outcome: Liveable, accessible and inclusive communities
Objective: Landscape and neighbourhood character

Theme: Productive Economy
Outcome 3: Strong economy for a smarter, cleaner future
Objective: Primary industry

Theme: Natural resources, environment
Outcome 4: Greener, wilder, climate-resilient environment
Objective: Biodiversity

### Strategic Interpretation

The planning system does not seek to preserve the Barossa by preventing change. Rather, it provides a framework through which change can be managed in a way that reinforces the region's defining qualities over time.

Each level of the planning hierarchy performs a distinct but complementary role. Legislation establishes purpose, strategic policy provides direction, and statutory planning instruments guide implementation through development assessment.

Maintaining alignment across these layers is fundamental to achieving consistent planning outcomes. Where the relationship between legislative intent, planning policy and development assessment becomes unclear, the interpretation of character may vary, leading to inconsistent decision-making and reduced confidence for applicants, assessment authorities and the broader community.

Understanding this relationship provides the context for the sections that follow. The remainder of this section examines how regional character is recognised as a planning consideration, interpreted through the Planning and Design Code, and applied through development assessment to support the long-term stewardship of the Barossa.

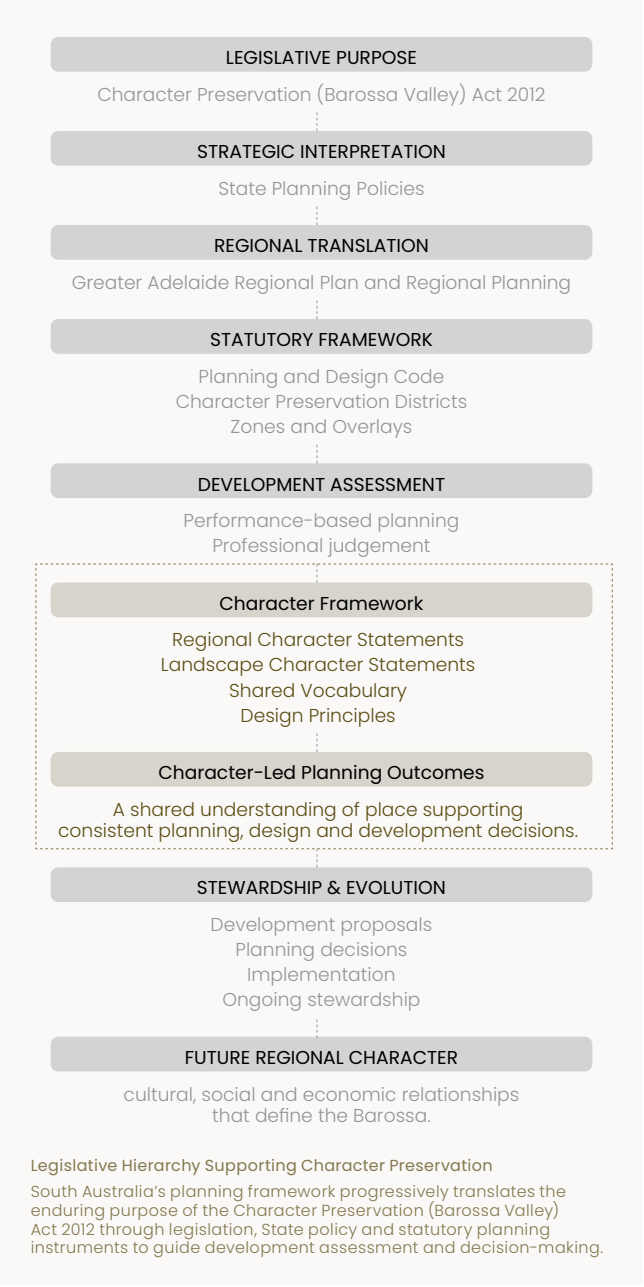
### From Legislative Purpose to Character-Led Planning

Since The Act was first introduced, South Australia's planning system has continued to evolve through successive reforms. Today, the State Planning Policies, The Greater Adelaide Regional Plan (GARP) and the Planning and Design Code provide the statutory mechanisms through which its purpose is implemented.

These reforms have modernised the planning system without changing the intent of character preservation. Rather than replacing the legislative purpose, they provide the strategic and statutory framework through which it is interpreted and applied when planning for such aspects as growth, environmental stewardship, housing, tourism, infrastructure and economic development.

A consistent finding of the review was that this progression—from legislative purpose, through strategic interpretation, to statutory implementation—is fundamental to understanding how regional character is recognised within South Australia's contemporary planning system.

This progression provides the foundation for the remainder of the section. The following sections examine in further detail how regional character is expressed as a planning consideration, interpreted through the Planning and Design Code, and ultimately applied through development assessment. Collectively, these planning mechanisms support the long-term stewardship of the Barossa's character while enabling its continued evolution.




Legislative Hierarchy Supporting Character Preservation

South Australia's planning framework progressively translates the enduring purpose of the Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 through legislation, State policy and statutory planning instruments to guide development assessment and decision-making.

## 3.3 Character as a Planning Consideration

### Character as an Organising Principle

Within South Australia's planning system, character is not a standalone planning policy. Rather, the review identified that the character of the Barossa cannot be adequately understood by considering individual attributes alone.

Instead, it emerges through the enduring relationships between landscape, productive land, settlement patterns, heritage, environmental systems and community life. These interconnected relationships have evolved through natural processes, agricultural production, cultural traditions, economic activity and everyday experience. Collectively, they create the regional identity that distinguishes the Barossa from other parts of South Australia.

Understanding character therefore shifts the focus from protecting individual physical elements towards recognising the broader systems and relationships that define regional identity. It is not simply what can be seen; it also reflects how landscape, land use, history, culture and community continue to interact and evolve within a living cultural landscape.

Preserving character therefore requires planning decisions to maintain and strengthen these defining relationships rather than simply protecting individual components. In doing so, change can occur while reinforcing the qualities that distinguish the Barossa over time.

### Character as a Planning Consideration

Recognising character as an organising principle requires more than acknowledging that the Barossa is distinctive. The evidence gathered through this review consistently demonstrated that planning decisions are strengthened by understanding how the defining qualities of place inform planning policy, development assessment and design.

South Australia's performance-based planning system relies upon informed professional judgement when interpreting planning policy. That judgement is strengthened by a shared understanding of the relationships, qualities and lived experiences that planning policy seeks to reinforce.

Character therefore becomes one of several planning considerations that informs professional judgement alongside the statutory planning framework established through the Planning and Design Code. Rather than replacing planning policy, zones, overlays or assessment criteria, an understanding of character supports their consistent interpretation by providing greater clarity about the defining qualities of place.

Viewing planning through this lens promotes greater consistency in decision-making while maintaining the flexibility of South Australia's planning system. Rather than prescribing a single design outcome, it provides a place-based understanding that enables high-quality contemporary development to respond positively to regional character.

### Character Preservation and Cumulative Change

Workshop discussions, stakeholder engagement and policy analysis consistently reinforced that regional character is rarely altered by a single development proposal. Instead, it evolves through the cumulative effect of many individual planning decisions made over time.

While individual developments may appear modest considered one at a time, their collective influence gradually strengthens or diminishes the relationships that define regional identity. Incremental changes to landscape patterns, productive land, settlement form, environmental systems and community life ultimately shape how the Barossa is experienced by future generations.

Recognising cumulative change reinforces the importance of considering planning decisions not only in relation to an individual site, but also within successive scales and the broader landscape systems and community relationships that define the region.

Character preservation therefore becomes an ongoing process of stewardship rather than a fixed planning outcome. It requires planning decisions to consider how change contributes positively to the long-term evolution of place while reinforcing the defining qualities that distinguish the Barossa.

### Overlays in the Planning and Design Code

Within the Planning and Design Code, overlays are the primary mechanism to spatially express State Planning Policies as they pick up location-specific planning issues of state interest. Overlays can span multiple zones and sub-zones and more than one overlay can apply to the same area.

Overlay policies take precedence over other Code policies.

Overlay policies are only relevant as set out in the zone classification tables. Overlays contain Assessment Provisions and a Procedural Matters table that sets out statutory referrals that apply in the Overlay area.

Relevant to this report, overlays provide a mechanism for recognising place-specific circumstances, values and priorities that extend beyond the broad application of zoning.

While zones establish the primary land use framework, overlays introduce additional layers of planning consideration that respond to local conditions and desired outcomes.

### From The Character Preservation District Overlay

The Character Preservation District Overlay provides the principal statutory mechanism within the Planning and Design Code for recognising place-specific character considerations associated with the Preservation Act.

The Overlay establishes where character preservation is a specific planning consideration and provides the statutory policy context for development assessment. However, like much of South Australia's performance-based planning system, its application relies upon informed professional judgement when interpreting qualitative concepts such as landscape character, settlement identity and local context.

It is this need for consistent interpretation within a performance-based planning system that informed the development of the Character Framework presented in this report.

### Role of the Character Preservation District Overlay

The Character Preservation Overlay identifies the areas where character preservation considerations apply and ensures that development assessment takes account of the objectives of The Act.

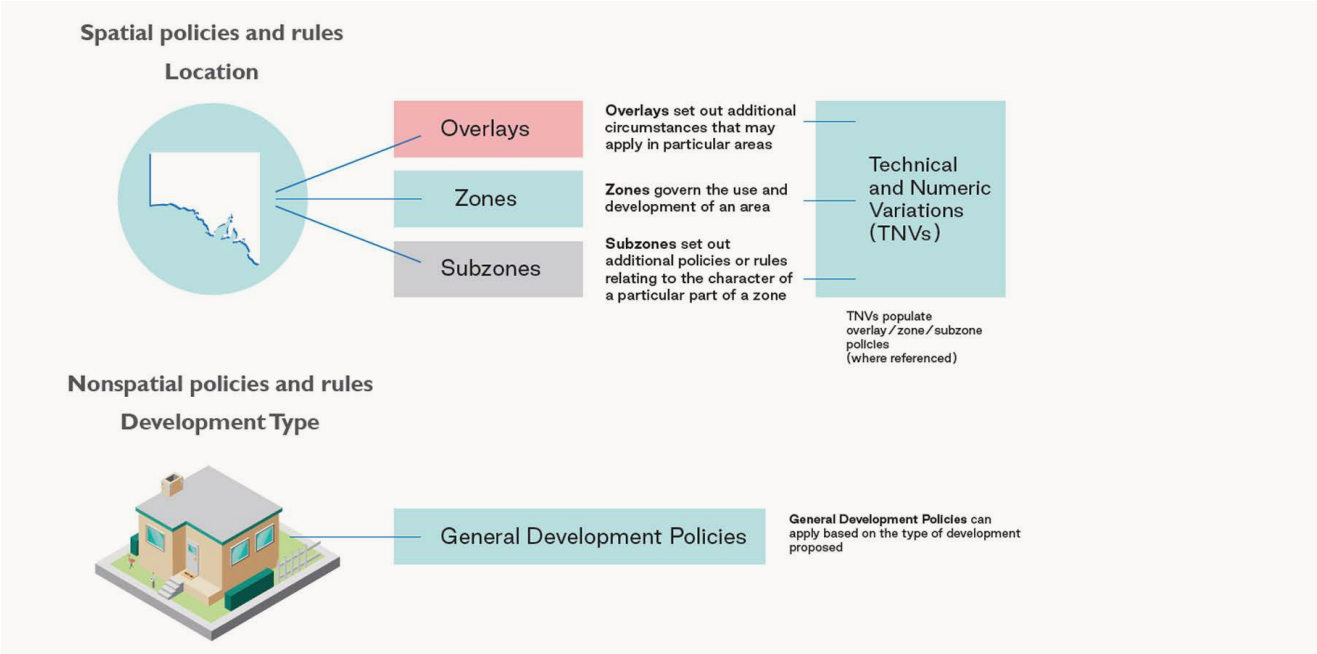
The Overlay is effective in establishing where character matters. However, it provides only a broad description of the qualities and values that contribute to regional character.

As a result, decision-makers are often required to interpret what character preservation means in practice and how it should influence development outcomes in different locations.

This creates the potential for varying interpretations and inconsistent application, particularly where a proposal involve competing considerations such as growth, tourism, housing or economic development.

### Overlays Applicable to the Barossa

As illustrated on the following page, numerous overlays apply to the Barossa at both a regional scale and specific to localised sites.




Structure of the Design Code. Source - Guide to the Planning and Design Code (June 2022)

## Overlays Applicable to the Barossa

| Summary | |
|---|---|
| Environmental | Protect ecological systems |
| Hazard | Manage risk and resilience |
| Heritage | Protect cultural assets |
| Character | Protect regional identity |
| Infrastructure | Coordinate movement and services |
| Development Management | Manage growth impacts |

| Overlay | Spatial application | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Affordable Housing | Parts of Greenock & Tanunda | Promotes integrated affordable housing |
| Character Area | Parts of Angaston | Protects valued local character |
| Significant Retirement Facility | Nuriootpa, Angaston, Tanunda | Supports aged-care development |
| Bushfire – High | Central east, Rowland Flat, Sandy Creek, Para Wirra | Minimise high bushfire risk |
| Bushfire – Medium | CPD periphery | Respond to medium bushfire risk |
| Bushfire – Urban | Interface Township edges | Manage bushfire interface |
| Flooding | Parts of Nuriootpa, Stockwell, Tanunda, Greenock | Reduce flood impacts |
| Flooding – General | Greenock | Manage general flood risk |
| Flooding – Evidence Required | Most CPD | Require flood assessment |
| Historic Area | Historic town areas | Conserve historic character |
| Heritage Adjacency | Around heritage places | Protect heritage setting |
| Local Heritage Place | Scattered across CPD | Conserve local heritage |
| State Heritage Place | Scattered across CPD | Conserve state heritage |
| Advertising Near Signals | Selected intersections | Reduce driver distraction |
| Major Urban Transport Routes | Major highways/corridors | Protect transport efficiency |
| Traffic Generating Development | Near major roads | Manage traffic impacts |
| Urban Transport Routes | Key arterial roads | Protect transport routes |
| Gas & Petroleum Pipelines | North & south corridors | Protect pipeline safety |
| Pipeline Facilities | Localised sites | Protect pipeline facilities |
| Native Vegetation | Majority of CPD | Protect native vegetation |
| Significant Landscape Protection | Eastern foothills | Protect scenic landscapes |
| State Significant Native Vegetation | Conservation parks & sites | Protect significant vegetation |
| MLR Catchment Area 1 | West of Williamstown | Protect water quality |
| MLR Catchment Area 2 | South of CPD | Protect water quality |
| Murray-Darling Basin | Eastern CPD | Protect basin water resources |
| Prescribed Water Resources | Majority of CPD | Support sustainable water use |
| River Murray Tributaries | Eastern CPD | Protect tributary environments |
| Water Protection Area | Majority of CPD | Protect water supplies |
| Character Preservation District | Entire CPD | Protect Barossa character |
| Dwelling Excision | Keyneton & Mount Pleasant | Allow limited dwelling excision |
| Interface Management | Burge Winery site | Manage land-use conflicts |
| Limited Land Division | Most rural CPD | Limit fragmentation of farmland |
| Significant Interface Management | Burge Winery site | Buffer significant activities |

## 3.4 Character in the Planning and Design Code

### Translating Legislative Intent into Planning Practice

The Act establishes the legislative purpose for protecting the defining qualities of the Barossa. Within South Australia's contemporary planning system, that purpose is translated into statutory planning policy through the State Planning Policies, regional planning, the Planning and Design Code, and the planning instruments used to assess development.

The review found that the Planning and Design Code provides the principal statutory framework through which character is considered during development assessment. Rather than relying on a single policy, the Code recognises character through an interconnected suite of planning policies that collectively attempt to guide land use, built form, landscape outcomes and environmental stewardship.

This layered approach enables character to be considered consistently while responding to the differing qualities of landscapes, townships and development contexts across the Barossa.

### The Role of Zones, Subzones and Overlays

Within the Planning and Design Code, Zones establish the primary land use expectations for different parts of the region, providing the framework that guides settlement patterns, land use, development intensity and future growth.

Subzones refine these provisions where a more locally specific policy response is required, recognising differences within broader planning areas. However, currently no subzones apply to the Character Preservation District.

Overlays operate across zones to identify particular environmental, landscape, heritage or hazard considerations that apply irrespective of land use. Rather than changing the underlying zoning, they ensure important place-based characteristics and constraints are recognised during development assessment.

Together, these planning mechanisms establish the statutory basis through which regional character is considered during development assessment.

Policy analysis undertaken as part of the review identified that many of the defining qualities associated with the Barossa's regional character—including landscape values, productive land, heritage, environmental systems, township form and scenic qualities—are already recognised through the combined operation of zones, overlays and assessment criteria within the Planning and Design Code.

Rather than introducing new planning policy, this review recognises these existing statutory mechanisms as the primary means through which the purpose of The Act is implemented

### General Development Policies

While zones outline what can occur in an area, general development policies broadly relate to how a development should occur. These polices address the functional requirements for a development type or class, such as minimisation of overshadowing for a multi-storey building.

General development policies contain Assessment Provisions and are linked to specific development types as listed in a zone's Classification Table.

| South Australia's Planning System | Character Framework (this report) |
|---|---|
| Character Preservation Act | |
| Planning Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 | |
| State Planning Policies | |
| Greater Adelaide Regional Plan | |
| Planning & Design Code | |
| Overlays / Zones / Subzones / General Development Policy / Assessment Criteria | |
| Development Assessment | Regional Character Statements |
| | Landscape Character Statements |
| | Shared Character Vocabulary |
| | Design Principles |
| Outcome: Character-led planning decisions | |

Relationship between South Australia's statutory planning framework and the Character Framework.

The Character Framework complements South Australia's existing planning system by strengthening the interpretation of regional character through Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements, shared character vocabulary and Design Principles. Together, these components support more consistent, place-responsive planning, design and development outcomes.

## 3.5 Strengthening Character Preservation

### From Statutory Planning to Consistent Interpretation

South Australia's planning system already provides a strong legislative and statutory framework for recognising and preserving regional character. The Preservation Act establishes the legislative purpose, while the Planning and Design Code, supported by State Planning Policies and regional planning, provides the statutory mechanisms through which that purpose is implemented.

As discussed throughout this section, South Australia's performance-based planning system relies upon informed professional judgement when interpreting planning policy. This flexibility enables planning decisions to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances while remaining aligned with legislative intent.

Across the review, a consistent theme emerged: while the statutory planning framework establishes how character is considered, the consistent interpretation of regional character depends upon a shared understanding of the defining relationships, qualities and lived experiences that make the Barossa distinctive.

This shared understanding provides the connection between legislative intent and its practical application through planning, design and development.

### The Role of the Character Framework

The Character Framework has been developed to strengthen this interpretive layer within South Australia's existing planning system.

It does not introduce additional statutory planning policy, replace the Planning and Design Code or diminish the importance of professional judgement. Rather, it complements the existing planning framework by providing a shared understanding of the defining qualities of the Barossa that planning policy seeks to protect and reinforce.

Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements, shared character vocabulary and Design Principles work together to establish a common language for understanding place. Collectively, they assist planners, designers, developers, assessment authorities, elected members, landowners and the broader community to interpret and apply the existing planning framework more consistently.

By strengthening the connection between legislative purpose, planning policy and the interpretation of place, the Character Framework supports more consistent, place-responsive planning and design outcomes across the Barossa.

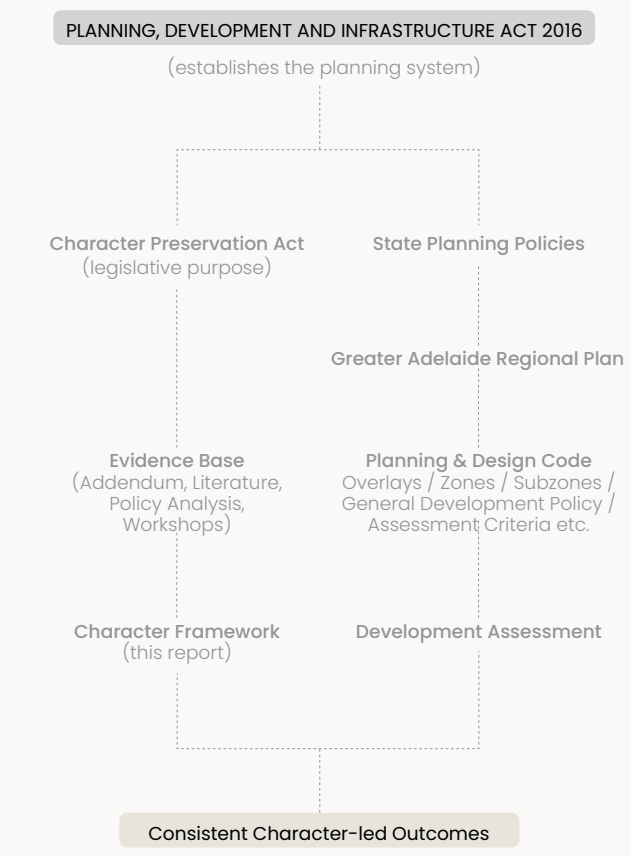
### Supporting Better Planning Outcomes

The purpose of the Character Framework is therefore not to prevent change, but to improve the consistency with which regional character is understood and interpreted through existing planning processes. Clarity and consistency also builds confidence from community stakeholders to investors.

Rather than prescribing particular design outcomes, the Framework provides practical guidance for interpreting regional character in a way that supports place-responsive planning, design and development.

This approach recognises that the long-term success of character preservation depends not only on the quality of individual planning decisions, but on maintaining a shared understanding of place over time.

Having established the relationship between legislative purpose, planning policy and consistent interpretation, the following sections examine how this shared understanding is translated into Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements, shared character vocabulary and Design Principles that collectively support the ongoing stewardship of the Barossa's regional character.




Translating legislative purpose into character-led planning outcomes.

The Character Framework complements South Australia's statutory planning system by drawing upon the legislative purpose of the Character Preservation Act, the existing planning framework and the project's evidence base to strengthen the interpretation of regional character. Together, these elements support more consistent character-led planning, design and development outcomes.

## 3.6 Character in a Contemporary Context

### Responding to Contemporary Change

While the legislative purpose of character preservation remains unchanged, the context in which planning decisions are made continues to evolve.

Across the review, a consistent theme emerged that the Barossa is responding to a broader range of environmental, social, economic and cultural influences than when the Preservation Act was first introduced. Climate adaptation, housing demand and affordability, agricultural diversification, tourism, infrastructure investment and changing community expectations are all reshaping the way places evolve.

These contemporary influences do not diminish the importance of character preservation. Rather, they reinforce the need for planning decisions that respond to change while maintaining the defining relationships that contribute to the Barossa's distinctive regional character.

### Character as a Living Cultural Landscape

A recurring finding of the review was that the Barossa should not be understood as a static landscape preserved unchanged through time.

Instead, it is a living cultural landscape whose identity continues to evolve through the interaction of landscape, productive agriculture, settlement, heritage, environmental systems and community life.

Character preservation is therefore an ongoing process of stewardship. The challenge is not whether change should occur, but how it can reinforce the qualities and relationships that continue to define the Barossa.

### Contemporary Planning Influences

Today's planning decisions require consideration of a broad range of interconnected influences, including:

- responding to housing demand while maintaining township identity;
- supporting productive agriculture alongside economic diversification;
- strengthening environmental resilience and responding to climate adaptation;
- balancing tourism growth with the protection of landscape character;
- recognising Aboriginal cultural values and broader community aspirations; and
- delivering infrastructure that supports regional growth while respecting local context.

Individually, these represent important planning considerations. Collectively, they demonstrate that character preservation increasingly requires planning decisions to balance multiple objectives while remaining consistent with the purpose established by the Preservation Act.

This evolving planning context reinforces the importance of informed professional judgement and a shared understanding of place when interpreting planning policy and assessing development proposals.

These interacting influences provide the context for the planning tensions explored in the following section.

## 3.7 Emerging Tensions and Considerations

### Balancing Multiple Objectives

Across the review, a series of recurring themes emerged that illustrate the broad agreement surrounding the qualities contributing to the Barossa's distinctive regional character. At the same time, they highlighted that planning decisions increasingly require the balancing of multiple, and sometimes competing, objectives.

Planning decisions consider how change can occur in ways that reinforce the defining relationships between landscape, productive agriculture, settlement, heritage, environmental systems and community life while responding to contemporary planning needs.

These considerations reflect the complexity of South Australia's planning system, where planning decisions respond to individual circumstances while remaining consistent with legislative purpose and planning policy.

### Understanding Planning Tensions

The tensions identified through this review are not contradictions within the planning system. Rather, they represent the ongoing balance required between legitimate planning objectives that are each important to the future of the Barossa.

The evidence gathered through the review demonstrated that these tensions should not be viewed as choices between one objective and another. Instead, they reflect the need for collective decision making and informed judgement that considers multiple planning objectives within the context of regional character.

Examples include balancing:

- protection of productive landscapes with opportunities for economic growth;
- maintaining township identity with housing demand;
- environmental stewardship with infrastructure investment;
- landscape and cultural values with tourism development;
- local identity with broader regional and State planning objectives; and
- flexibility in development assessment with the need for consistent planning outcomes.

These tensions are not intended to suggest that one objective should prevail over another. Rather, they highlight the importance of careful interpretation, informed judgement and a shared understanding of regional character when responding to change. We aim to design for co-existence of tensions.

### From Tensions to Character-Led Planning

Recognising these tensions provides the foundation for the Character Framework developed through this review.

Recognising these tensions provides the context for the Character Framework presented in the following sections, where Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements, shared character vocabulary and Design Principles provide practical tools to support consistent interpretation.

### Challenge 1 - Translating Legislative Purpose

**Character Preservation Act**
*Establishes legislative purpose*
↓
**State Planning Policies & Regional Plan**
*Interpret that purpose*
↓
**Planning and Design Code**
*Provides the statutory framework*
↓
**Character Preservation Overlay**
*Applies place-based policy*

→

**Supporting Strategic Foundation**
Former Character Preservation Addendum to the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (2017 Update)

- Established the first comprehensive strategic interpretation of Barossa character.
- Continues to inform Council's understanding of regional character.
- Provides an important foundation for the Character Framework.

***How can the legislative purpose established by the Character Preservation Act be more consistently interpreted through South Australia's contemporary planning framework?***

### Challenge 2 — Place-Based Interpretation

**Planning & Design Code**
↓
**Performance-based Assessment**
↓
**Professional Judgement**

***How can the defining qualities of place such as:***

- landscape relationships
- productive landscapes
- township identity
- living heritage
- community character

***be consistently interpreted through performance-based planning?***

### Challenge 3 — Stewardship and Cumulative Change

**Development Assessment**
↓
**Planning Decision**
↓
**Development Outcome**
↓
**Cumulative Change**
↓
**Regional Character**

***How can individual planning decisions collectively reinforce the long-term stewardship and evolution of the Barossa?***

**Project Response**

*Strengthen the consistent interpretation of regional character through a contemporary Character Framework that complements South Australia's existing planning system.*

The following sections present the Character Framework developed in response to these challenges, establishing a shared understanding of the Barossa's defining qualities, relationships and lived experiences to support more consistent planning, design and development outcomes.

Planning challenges informing the development of the Character Framework.

The literature review, workshop discussions and stakeholder engagement identified three interrelated challenges: translating legislative purpose through South Australia's contemporary planning system, strengthening the interpretation of place within performance-based planning, and supporting the long-term stewardship of regional character. These findings informed the development of the Character Framework presented in this report.

The following tensions should be read collectively rather than individually. While each explores a distinct planning consideration, together they illustrate the interconnected nature of character preservation and reinforce the need for planning responses that recognise the Barossa as a living, evolving cultural landscape.

| 1. Preservation versus Evolution | 2. Landscape Systems versus Mapped Boundaries | 3. Local Distinction versus State-wide Consistency |
|---|---|---|
| The Barossa derives much of its identity from landscapes, settlement patterns, agricultural traditions and cultural heritage that have evolved over generations. At the same time, communities, industries and environments continue to change in response to new opportunities and challenges.<br>The tension is therefore not whether change should occur, but how change can occur in ways that reinforce rather than diminish regional character. | Many of the qualities that contribute to Barossa character are experienced through continuous landscape systems, productive land, viewsheds and relationships between settlements.<br>Planning systems, however, require clearly defined boundaries, overlays and assessment areas in order to operate. This creates an ongoing tension between the way landscapes function and the way planning frameworks are mapped and administered. | The Planning and Design Code provides a consistent planning framework across South Australia, supporting transparency and efficiency within the planning system.<br>At the same time, the Barossa possesses distinctive landscape, agricultural, heritage and settlement characteristics that differ from many other regions. Maintaining local distinctiveness within a state-wide planning framework remains an ongoing consideration. |
| **Tension 1:** Preservation x Evolution | **Tension 2:** Landscape Systems x Administrative Frameworks | **Tension 3:** Regional Identity ⟷ State-wide Planning Consistency |
| **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- recognise the Barossa as a place of State significance<br>- preserve and enhance the region's distinctive character<br>- protect productive landscapes, settlement identity and environmental values<br>- guide future change rather than prevent development | **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- preserve the special character of the Barossa landscape<br>- recognise the relationships between productive land, settlements and environmental systems<br>- protect the regional landscape as a connected whole | **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- recognise the Barossa as a unique region of State significance<br>- protect the distinctive qualities that differentiate the Barossa from other regions<br>- maintain regional identity through planning |
| **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- preservation is achieved through long-term stewardship<br>- character is expressed through relationships, not isolated elements<br>- change should reinforce rather than diminish regional identity<br>- the Barossa must continue to evolve while remaining recognisably Barossa | **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- landscape systems extend beyond mapped boundaries<br>- watersheds, biodiversity, productive land and visual catchments function as interconnected systems<br>- regional character is experienced as a continuous landscape rather than individual planning areas<br>- understanding landscape relationships is fundamental to character preservation | **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- every region possesses distinctive characteristics<br>- planning should respond to local landscape, heritage and community context<br>- regional identity strengthens consistency rather than conflicts with it<br>- place-based understanding supports better planning outcomes |
| **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- supports context-responsive development<br>- balances environmental, economic and social objectives<br>- encourages development that responds to local context<br>- manages cumulative change through strategic planning and development assessment | **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- relies upon mapped zones, overlays and assessment areas<br>- provides administrative certainty through defined planning boundaries<br>- applies consistent assessment processes across mapped areas<br>- recognises landscape values through multiple planning mechanisms | **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- provides a consistent planning system across South Australia<br>- applies common planning processes and assessment pathways<br>- enables regional variation through zones, overlays and strategic policy<br>- relies upon professional judgement to respond to local context |
| **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- change is inevitable and necessary<br>- agriculture, tourism and communities will continue to evolve<br>- cumulative incremental change presents the greatest risk<br>- stewardship is more important than preservation alone<br>- planning should guide positive evolution rather than resist change<br>SO<br>**Preservation becomes stewardship.**<br>Guide change so future generations inherit a Barossa that remains distinctly Barossa while continuing to evolve.<br>**Question**<br>*How can the Barossa continue to evolve while strengthening the qualities that define its identity?* | **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- landscape systems extend beyond overlay boundaries<br>- ridgelines, valleys and productive land operate as connected landscapes<br>- administrative boundaries do not always reflect landscape character<br>- planning decisions should consider relationships beyond individual sites<br>- landscape should be understood at multiple scales<br>SO<br>**Planning should recognise landscape systems, not simply mapped boundaries.**<br>Planning decisions should respond to the broader landscape relationships that define regional character.<br>**Question**<br>*How can planning frameworks better recognise landscape systems that extend beyond administrative and statutory boundaries?* | **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- the Barossa differs from many other regions<br>- consistent planning processes are valuable<br>- local distinctiveness can be diluted through generic interpretation<br>- planners require a stronger understanding of regional context<br>- character guidance should strengthen confidence rather than create inconsistency<br>SO<br>**Consistency should occur through process, not uniform outcomes.**<br>A consistent planning system should enable locally distinctive places rather than produce generic development outcomes.<br>**Question**<br>*How can a consistent State-wide planning system better recognise and reinforce the unique identity of regions such as the Barossa?* |

The Character Framework presented in this report responds to this need through a series of interconnected components that collectively strengthen the interpretation of place. Their relationship to the contemporary planning framework is illustrated in Figure X.

| 4. Flexibility versus Development Certainty | 5. Productive Landscapes versus Tourism | 4. Township Identity versus Housing Demand |
|---|---|---|
| Planning systems seek to provide certainty for applicants, communities and decision-makers through clearly articulated policies and assessment criteria.<br>At the same time, flexibility is often required to respond to unique site conditions, changing circumstances and innovative solutions. Balancing flexibility with certainty remains a fundamental challenge within character-based planning frameworks. | Tourism is a major contributor to the regional economy and relies heavily on the landscapes, agricultural traditions and cultural experiences that define the Barossa.<br>At the same time, tourism growth can create pressure for additional development, infrastructure and visitor accommodation. Maintaining the balance between economic opportunity and the long-term stewardship of productive landscapes remains a key consideration. | Population growth and changing housing needs create demand for additional development within and around established settlements.<br>While growth can support community resilience and economic sustainability, it also has the potential to influence township form, settlement patterns and local identity. Future growth must therefore be carefully considered in the context of maintaining the distinctive character of individual townships and villages. |
| **Tension 4:** Performance-Based Assessment x Character Interpretation | **Tension 5:** Productive Landscapes x Visitor Economy | **Tension 6:** Township Identity x Housing Growth |
| **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- preserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Barossa<br>- ensure planning decisions reinforce regional character<br>- provide an enduring purpose for future development | **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- protect productive agricultural land<br>- preserve the working landscape of the Barossa<br>- recognise the importance of agriculture to regional identity | **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- preserve the distinct identity of Barossa townships<br>- maintain separation between settlements<br>- protect the relationship between townships and surrounding productive landscapes |
| **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- character cannot be fully described through prescriptive rules alone<br>- interpretation is essential when assessing place-based outcomes<br>- understanding local context is fundamental to good planning<br>- planning should encourage high-quality contemporary design that responds to place | **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- agriculture and tourism are mutually reinforcing<br>- productive landscapes underpin the Barossa's international reputation<br>- landscape is both an economic asset and a cultural asset<br>- long-term prosperity depends upon maintaining the relationship between production and place | **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- housing growth is necessary to support thriving communities<br>- township character is shaped by scale, setting and landscape relationships<br>- growth should reinforce existing settlement patterns<br>- maintaining distinct township identities contributes to long-term regional resilience |
| **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- applies a performance-based approach to development assessment<br>- encourages context-responsive design solutions<br>- relies upon professional judgement alongside statutory policy<br>- considers development against desired planning outcomes rather than fixed design solutions | **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- protects primary production areas<br>- supports appropriate tourism development<br>- manages land use compatibility<br>- seeks to balance economic development with landscape protection | **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- identifies areas for future housing growth<br>- manages urban expansion through zoning and strategic planning<br>- encourages development within appropriate settlement areas<br>- considers neighbourhood character, landscape setting and infrastructure capacity |
| **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- greater consistency is needed when interpreting character<br>- applicants require clearer expectations<br>- decision-makers benefit from stronger place-based guidance<br>- good contemporary design should be encouraged where it strengthens regional character<br>- interpretation should be supported without becoming overly prescriptive<br>SO<br>**Character should inform judgement, not replace it.**<br>A shared understanding of place strengthens performance-based planning by supporting more confident and consistent decision-making.<br>**Question**<br>*How can planning provide greater certainty while retaining the flexibility needed to respond to the unique circumstances of place?* | **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- vineyards remain central to the Barossa's identity<br>- tourism depends upon authentic working landscapes<br>- productive land should not be incrementally fragmented<br>- economic diversification is important for regional resilience<br>- future investment should strengthen rather than compete with productive landscapes<br>SO<br>**Protect the landscape that supports the economy.**<br>The visitor economy should be understood as a product of the Barossa's productive landscape, not an alternative to it.<br>**Question**<br>*How can future investment strengthen both agricultural productivity and the visitor economy without compromising the qualities that sustain either?* | **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- housing affordability is an increasing concern<br>- younger generations need opportunities to remain within the region<br>- township expansion should respect existing settlement form<br>- maintaining separation between settlements remains essential<br>- housing diversity should strengthen community continuity rather than suburbanise the landscape<br>SO<br>**Grow communities without losing their identity.**<br>Future housing should reinforce the distinctive character of individual townships while supporting community resilience and long-term liveability.<br>**Question**<br>*How can the Barossa accommodate future housing needs while maintaining the individuality, scale and landscape setting of its townships?* |

| 7. Quantitative Controls versus Qualitative Character | 8. Strategic Intent versus Assessment Translation | 9. Local Knowledge versus Professional Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| Many of the qualities identified through the Character Preservation framework are qualitative in nature. Concepts such as village character, township identity, scenic quality and authenticity are widely recognised, yet are difficult to define through measurable standards alone.<br><br>Development assessment, however, often relies upon quantitative controls such as building heights, setbacks, frontage widths and site coverage. This creates an ongoing challenge regarding how qualitative character aspirations are translated into measurable planning provisions. | The Character Preservation Act establishes the intent of the framework, while the Character Preservation Addendum provides a richer description of the values and attributes that contribute to regional character.<br><br>Development assessment occurs through overlays, zones, policies and assessment criteria contained within the Planning and Design Code. As strategic objectives are translated through each layer of the planning framework, maintaining a clear line of sight between intent, policy, assessment and outcomes becomes increasingly important. | Character is often understood through lived experience, local knowledge and long-standing community relationships with place.<br><br>Development assessment increasingly operates within broader state-wide planning systems, design review processes and professional assessment frameworks. Balancing local understanding with professional expertise remains an important consideration when interpreting and applying character-related policies. |
| **Tension 7:** Measurable Standards x Place-Based Character | **Tension 8:** Strategic Intent x Statutory Implementation | **Tension 9:** Local Knowledge x Professional Judgement |
| **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- preserve the distinctive character of the Barossa<br>- recognise the unique qualities that contribute to regional identity<br>- support planning outcomes that respond to place | **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- establish the purpose of preserving the Barossa's distinctive character<br>- recognise character as a matter of State significance<br>- provide enduring direction for future planning and development | **Legislative Intent**<br>The Character Preservation Act seeks to:<br>- recognise the significance of the Barossa's distinctive character<br>- support informed planning decisions that protect regional identity<br>- encourage long-term stewardship of place |
| **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- character extends beyond measurable physical attributes<br>- relationships, setting and context are fundamental to place<br>- qualitative understanding complements quantitative assessment<br>- character is best understood through both evidence and experience | **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- legislative intent requires ongoing interpretation<br>- strategic planning provides the connection between purpose and implementation<br>- character values should inform planning policy and design guidance<br>- a clear line of sight should exist from legislation through to development outcomes | **Strategic Interpretation**<br>Successive strategic work recognises that:<br>- understanding character requires both technical expertise and local knowledge<br>- community values contribute to the interpretation of place<br>- planning benefits from multiple perspectives<br>- stewardship is strengthened through shared understanding |
| **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- incorporates measurable planning standards where appropriate<br>- applies performance-based assessment to qualitative matters<br>- considers design, context and character alongside statutory requirements<br>- supports professional judgement in evaluating place-based outcomes | **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- translates strategic intent through the Planning and Design Code<br>- applies planning policy through development assessment<br>- relies upon interpretation when considering character outcomes<br>- provides statutory mechanisms that support place-responsive decision-making | **Current Planning Framework**<br>The contemporary planning framework:<br>- relies upon professional assessment against statutory policy<br>- encourages community participation through planning processes<br>- incorporates technical advice and evidence-based decision-making<br>- recognises that planning outcomes are strengthened through informed engagement |
| **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- not everything that contributes to character can be measured<br>- sense of place is experienced through relationships rather than individual elements<br>- quantitative standards alone cannot define good outcomes<br>- character guidance should assist interpretation rather than prescribe design<br>- shared language improves consistency without reducing flexibility<br>SO<br>**Measure what can be measured. Understand what cannot.**<br>Good planning combines objective standards with a deeper understanding of place and character..<br><br>**Question**<br>*How can planning frameworks better recognise the qualities of place that cannot be captured through measurable standards alone?* | **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- stronger links are needed between legislation, policy and assessment<br>- clearer interpretation would improve consistency and transparency<br>- decision-makers benefit from greater place-based understanding<br>- character guidance should support rather than duplicate planning policy<br>- the Character Framework provides an opportunity to strengthen this translation<br>SO<br>**Strengthen the line of sight from legislation to place.**<br>Character guidance should improve the translation of legislative intent into consistent planning and development outcomes.<br><br>**Question**<br>*How can legislative intent be more consistently translated into planning policy, development assessment and on-the-ground outcomes?* | **Workshop Insights**<br>The Working Group identified that:<br>- local knowledge provides valuable insight into character<br>- professional judgement remains essential for consistent planning decisions<br>- community experience should inform rather than replace statutory assessment<br>- collaboration builds confidence in planning outcomes<br>- shared understanding strengthens long-term stewardship<br>SO<br>**Good planning combines professional expertise with local knowledge.**<br>The strongest planning decisions emerge when statutory policy, professional judgement and community understanding work together.<br><br>**Question**<br>*How can planning processes better integrate local knowledge with professional judgement to strengthen long-term stewardship of the Barossa?* |

## 3.8 From Legislative Purpose to Character-Led Planning

### From Legislative Purpose to Character-Led Planning

The Character Framework developed through this review strengthens the interpretation of regional character by building upon South Australia's existing planning framework. This table illustrates how legislative purpose is translated through strategic planning, statutory planning and development assessment into the Character Framework, implemented through Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements, shared vocabulary and Design Principles.

| | FOUNDATION | TRANSLATION | | | OUTCOME | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Character Theme | Legislative Purpose | Strategic Interpretation | Statutory Translation | Strategic Insights | Character Framework Response | Character Implementation |
| Regional Character | | | | | | |
| **Ecological Systems and Landscape Resilience** | Protect landscapes and environmental systems that contribute to regional character. | Ecological systems underpin landscape stewardship, resilience and long-term environmental health. | Biodiversity policy, natural resource planning, environmental overlays and landscape provisions collectively reinforce ecological character. | Biodiversity and ecological restoration were consistently identified as fundamental to the Barossa. Opportunity to integrate ecological systems more explicitly into character understanding. | Regional Character Statements recognise ecological systems as foundational relationships underpinning stewardship, resilience and landscape identity. | Landscape Character Statements; Design Principle – Environmental Stewardship |
| **Landscape Relationships and Visual Amenity** | Strong | Protect rural landscape, productive land and economic viability of primary production. | Character Preservation Overlay, Rural Zones | Show agriculture landscape; working agrarian landscape; terroir | Tourism, housing and diversification pressures | Productive landscapes are fundamental character assets, not development reserves |
| | Recognise the significance of landscape character, scenic quality and visual amenity. | Views, landform and landscape relationships contribute to identity and sense of place. | Strategic planning, Character Preservation Districts and landscape provisions recognise scenic landscapes. | Significant views, ridgelines and visual relationships repeatedly identified. Opportunity to recognise landscape systems beyond mapped boundaries. | Regional and Landscape Character Statements recognise landscape systems and visual relationships as connected regional assets. | Regional Character Statement 01; Landscape Character Statements |
| Living Productive Landscapes | Preserve productive agricultural land and regional character. | Productive landscapes sustain environmental, cultural, social and economic identity. | Primary Production Zones, strategic planning and Character Preservation Districts support productive landscapes. | Agriculture consistently recognised as the foundation of regional identity. Opportunity to support evolving agricultural systems while maintaining landscape identity. | Productive landscapes are recognised as living systems that sustain stewardship, prosperity and regional identity. | Regional Character Statement 02; Landscape Character Statements; Design Principles |
| Evolving Productive Systems | Protect agriculture while enabling its ongoing viability. | Farming systems continue to evolve in response to environmental, technological and economic change. | Rural planning policy supports agricultural adaptation while maintaining productive land. | Farming innovation linked directly to long-term resilience. Opportunity to accommodate innovation while reinforcing regional identity. | Productive Landscapes are recognised as living systems that continue to evolve while sustaining regional identity. | Regional Character Statement 02; Landscape Character Statements; Design Principles |
| Resilience and Adaptation | Protect the long-term resilience of the Barossa. | Stewardship increasingly includes adaptation to environmental and climatic change. | Biodiversity, water, hazard and natural resource planning support resilience. | Climate resilience consistently emerged throughout engagement. Opportunity to integrate resilience more explicitly into regional character. | Stewardship, resilience and adaptation become recurring principles throughout the Character Framework. | Regional Character Statements; Design Principles |

## 3.8 From Legislative Purpose to Character-Led Planning (continued)

| | FOUNDATION | TRANSLATION | | | OUTCOME | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Character Theme | Legislative Purpose | Strategic Interpretation | Statutory Translation | Strategic Insights | Character Framework Response | Character Implementation |
| **Settlement Character** | | | | | | |
| Arrival and Transition | Recognise the importance of landscape setting and regional identity. | Arrival experiences establish first impressions and reinforce a sense of place by revealing the transition between regions and landscapes. | Local planning policy provides limited guidance for coordinated gateway experiences. | Gateways consistently emerged as defining moments of arrival. Stronger recognition of transition landscapes would reinforce regional identity before entering townships. | The Character Framework recognises arrival and transition landscapes as important expressions of regional identity, reinforcing landscape continuity, settlement setting and the experience of entering the Barossa. | Landscape Character Statements; Design Principles – Arrival, Movement & Landscape Setting |
| Settlement Pattern and Township Distinction | Preserve the distinct identity of settlements and their landscape setting. | Settlement separation reinforces township identity and landscape structure. | Settlement boundaries, zoning and strategic planning guide future growth. | Strong support for maintaining township distinction. Opportunity to reinforce identity as settlements evolve. | Character Statements reinforce the relationship between settlements and surrounding landscapes, supporting growth that strengthens township identity. | Regional Character Statement 03; Design Principles – Settlement & Growth |
| Settlement and Landscape Interface | Protect the relationship between settlements and surrounding landscapes. | Settlement edges define where towns meet productive landscapes. | Current policy provides variable responses across settlements. | Concern regarding suburbanisation and incremental edge expansion. Opportunity to strengthen guidance for settlement edges. | The Character Framework reinforces settlement edges as places where landscape, topography, history and township identity remain clearly expressed. | Landscape Character Statements; Design Principles |
| Distinctive Settlements | Preserve the distinctive identity of Barossa townships. | Every township contributes a unique expression of regional character. | Character policy currently varies across settlements. | Individual township identities consistently recognised. Opportunity to better articulate their defining qualities. | Regional and Landscape Character Statements describe the physical characteristics, relationships, defining qualities and lived experiences that distinguish each township and landscape unit. | Settlement-based Character Statements; Design Principles |
| Character Framwork | Provide a shared understanding of place that supports the legislative purpose of the Character Preservation Act. | Translate legislative purpose into a contemporary understanding of regional character. | Support the consistent interpretation of existing planning policy within South Australia's performance-based planning system. | Improve confidence, transparency and consistency in planning and design without increasing regulation or creating additional statutory policy. | The Character Framework establishes Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements, shared vocabulary and Design Principles that collectively strengthen the interpretation of South Australia's planning framework through a common understanding of place. | Section 7 – Regional Character Statements; Landscape Character Statements; Shared Vocabulary; Section 8 – Design Principles |

## 3.8 From Legislative Purpose to Character-Led Planning (continued)

| | FOUNDATION | TRANSLATION | | | OUTCOME | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Character Theme | Legislative Purpose | Strategic Interpretation | Statutory Translation | Strategic Insights | Character Framework Response | Character Implementation |
| **Living Cultural Landscape** | | | | | | |
| Authentic Visitor Experience | Protect the qualities that make the Barossa distinctive. | Tourism should emerge from authentic landscape, agriculture, heritage and community. | Tourism supported through strategic planning, land use policy and development assessment. | Tourism recognised as dependent upon productive landscapes and local identity. Opportunity to ensure tourism reinforces regional character. | The Character Framework positions tourism as an outcome of authentic landscape, agriculture, heritage and community rather than a driver of character change. | Regional Character Statement 02; Regional Character Statement 05; Design Principles |
| Community Identity and Stewarship | Recognise community as a defining contributor to regional character. | Long-term stewardship depends upon community participation, cultural continuity and local knowledge. | Community engagement, liveability and social wellbeing policies support ongoing stewardship. | Community identity consistently emerged as fundamental to long-term resilience. | Regional Character Statements and Design Principles recognise community as an active contributor to character rather than a passive beneficiary. | Regional Character Statement 05; Design Principles – Community |
| Living Heritage | Protect places that contribute to the Barossa's cultural identity. | Heritage contributes to historical continuity while supporting contemporary identity. | Heritage Overlays and Historic Area Statements provide statutory recognition. | Strong support for adaptive reuse and cultural continuity. Opportunity to recognise heritage as part of broader cultural landscapes. | The Character Framework positions heritage as a living contributor to identity, community wellbeing and future prosperity. | Regional Character Statement 04; Design Principles – Heritage |
| Place-Based Interpretation | Ensure planning decisions reinforce the distinctive character of the Barossa. | Legislative intent requires ongoing interpretation as communities, landscapes and planning systems evolve. | Performance-based planning relies upon informed professional judgement supported by statutory policy. | Participants consistently sought clearer and more transparent interpretation of character. Opportunity to strengthen the translation between legislation, policy and place. | Regional Character Statements, Landscape Unit Character Statements and Design Principles provide the interpretive layer that translates legislative intent into a shared understanding of the Barossa's landscapes, settlements and communities, supporting more consistent planning, design and investment decisions. | Entire Character Framework |
| Character Framwork | Provide a shared understanding of place that supports the legislative purpose of the Character Preservation Act. | Translate legislative purpose.Translate legislative purpose into a contemporary understanding of regional character. | Support the consistent interpretation of existing planning policy within South Australia's performance-based planning system. | Improve confidence, transparency and consistency in planning and design without increasing regulation or creating additional statutory policy. | The Character Framework establishes Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements, shared vocabulary and Design Principles that collectively strengthen the interpretation of South Australia's planning framework through a common understanding of place. | Section 7 – Regional Character Statements; Landscape Character Statements; Shared Vocabulary; Section 8 – Design Principles |

## 3.9 Reviewing Character Preservation Now

### An Enduring Purpose in a Contemporary Planning Context

The Preservation Act established an enduring legislative purpose: to recognise and preserve the Barossa as a place of State significance. While that purpose has remained consistent, the planning context in which it is interpreted has continued to evolve through successive planning reforms and changing environmental, social and economic conditions.

Today, the State Planning Policies, regional planning, the Planning and Design Code and South Australia's planning system collectively provide the statutory framework for guiding development. Together, these planning mechanisms support growth, investment and change while reinforcing the defining qualities that contribute to the Barossa's distinctive regional character.

The review has demonstrated that the need for character preservation has not diminished; rather, the way it is interpreted and applied continues to evolve. As planning decisions respond to increasingly complex and interconnected issues, a shared understanding of place becomes increasingly important in supporting consistent planning outcomes.

### Strengthening the Interpretation of Place

A recurring theme throughout the review was the importance of maintaining a clear connection between:

- legislative purpose;
- strategic planning;
- regional planning;
- statutory planning;
- development assessment; and
- place outcomes.

Each component performs a distinct role within South Australia's planning system.

- Legislation establishes purpose.
- Strategic planning provides direction.
- Statutory planning establishes the policy framework.
- Development assessment applies planning policy through informed professional judgement.
- The Character Framework strengthens the consistent interpretation of place by supporting a shared understanding of regional character.

Rather than introducing additional statutory planning policy, the Character Framework complements the existing planning system by strengthening the interpretation and application of planning policy across different places, proposals and decision-makers.

### A Shared Understanding of Place

One of the clearest findings of the review was that different disciplines often describe the same places in different ways.

Planners, designers, environmental specialists, primary producers, Traditional Owners, elected members and community members each bring valuable perspectives to understanding regional character. Rather than replacing these perspectives, the Character Framework establishes a shared language through which they can be understood collectively.

Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements, shared character vocabulary and Design Principles together provide this interpretive framework. They support greater consistency in planning, design, investment and community decision-making by reinforcing the defining relationships that distinguish the Barossa.

### Bringing the Planning Framework Together

Character preservation is achieved through the combined operation of legislative purpose, strategic planning, statutory planning and informed development assessment, rather than through any single planning instrument.

The Character Framework builds upon this existing planning hierarchy by strengthening the interpretation of regional character. It provides a practical means of understanding the relationships, qualities and lived experiences that planning policy seeks to reinforce, supporting more consistent and place-responsive planning outcomes across the Barossa.

We shape our environments,
and thereafter they shape us.

Winston Churchill

# 4. Approach



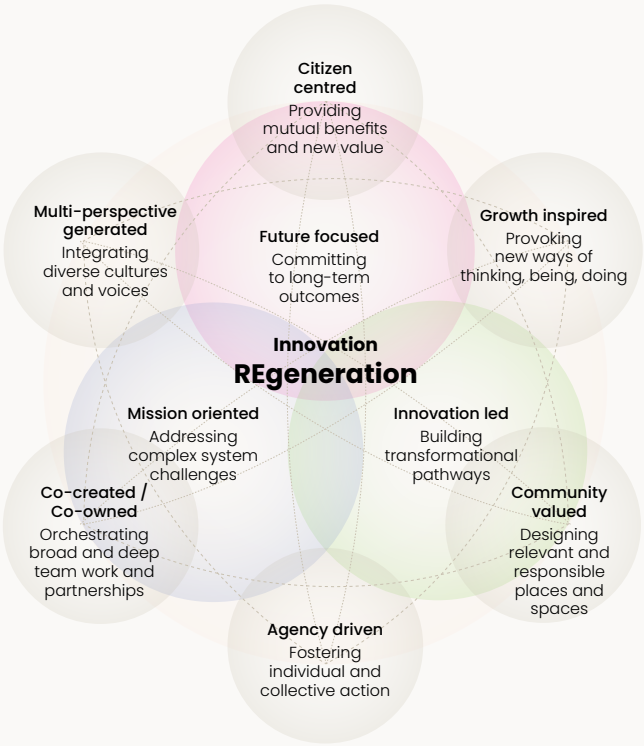


## 4. Approach

4.1 Leading Practice and Innovation
4.2 Define, Align, Design
4.3 Design, Planning, Development
4.4 Translation, Transition, Transformation

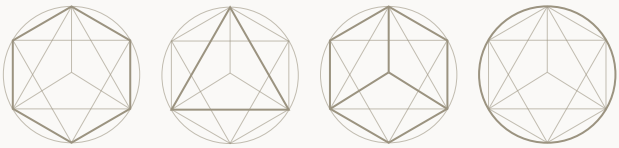
## 5. Mission Mapping

## 6. Strategic Directions




## Our values centre on collaboration and innovation

We believe in empowering inclusive participation at every scale, ensuring that the Barossa reflects and respects its unique context. Through guiding principles, we see the potential for the Barossa to be a global exemplar of a prosperous, resilient region for generations to come.



**Integrating enabling principles** and fostering deep connections between people, nature and built form.

**Building enduring partnerships** across all sectors and the public to unlock shared experience and opportunities.

**Designing adaptable planning** that supports long-term investment, regeneration and community-driven outcomes.

**Fostering shared learning** for a shared journey and meaningful, embedded change.

## Deep Engagement with the Councils and Working Group

Our collaboration brings together everyone while exemplifying best practices and expertise in:

- **Future-focused strategy and process:** *Crafting pathways to meet evolving needs*
- **Authentic engagement:** *Ensuring every voice is heard and valued*
- **Climate, culture, and context:** *Embedding place-based design at its core*
- **Empowering experiences:** *Designing environments where everyone thrives*
- **Learning environment:** *Creating spaces for enabling choices*
- **Community design excellence:** *Prioritising people in every decision*
- **Government policy and project delivery:** *Aligning with governance and delivery requirements*
- **International research and pedagogy:** *Infusing global insights into local practices*
- **Strategic and Systems Innovation:** *Extending boundaries to deliver impactful outcomes*

# 4. Approach

### An Integrated Approach to Character Preservation

This project recognises that character preservation is not solely a planning exercise. The qualities that define the Barossa have emerged through the interaction of landscape, agriculture, industry, heritage, community values and economic activity over many generations. As a result, any effort to strengthen character preservation must consider not only the physical landscape, but also the social, cultural and economic systems that contribute to the region's identity.

The objective of this work is twofold: to provide a clearer definition of the character that is to be preserved, and to strengthen guidance for how future development can contribute positively to the Barossa's long-term prosperity and evolution.

Central to the project is the understanding that preserving character does not mean preserving a fixed moment in time. Rather, it involves ensuring that change occurs in ways that reinforce the qualities that make the Barossa distinctive while supporting a diverse, resilient and adaptive future.

### Connecting Values, Prosperity and Governance

The approach adopted for this project operates across three interconnected scales.

At the community level, the work is grounded in an understanding of values, identity and character. Through engagement and research, the project seeks to understand the qualities that communities recognise, value and wish to carry forward into the future.

At the regional level, the work considers the economic systems that support the Barossa's long-term viability. This includes understanding the relationship between agriculture, wine production, tourism, small business, employment, housing and broader economic diversification. The project recognises that character and prosperity are interconnected, and that preserving the qualities that define the region must occur alongside efforts to support economic resilience and opportunity.

At the governance level, the work seeks to translate these insights into practical planning and policy mechanisms. This includes the development of recommendations that can strengthen the Character Preservation Overlay and improve the way character preservation objectives are interpreted and applied through the Planning and Design Code.

In this sense, the project is grounded in community values, informed by economic realities, and directed toward practical planning outcomes.

### Alignment Across Community, Industry and Government

A key consideration throughout the project has been the need to align the interests of multiple stakeholders.

For the community, character preservation provides a means of protecting the qualities that contribute to identity, belonging and sense of place.

For industry, character contributes directly to the value and reputation of the region and supports sectors including agriculture, wine production, tourism and associated businesses.

For government, the Character Preservation Area represents a significant regional asset whose contribution extends beyond local boundaries and supports broader economic, cultural and planning objectives for South Australia.

The long-term success of character preservation therefore depends upon achieving alignment between community aspirations, industry needs and government priorities. The Character Preservation Overlay must be capable of supporting outcomes that are valued by all of these groups if it is to remain relevant and effective over time.

### Identifying Leverage Points for Long-Term Success

The project also seeks to identify the key leverage points within the planning and governance system that can influence long-term character outcomes.

Character is affected not only by major strategic decisions, but also by the cumulative effect of many smaller decisions relating to land use, development, investment and design. Strengthening the effectiveness of the Character Preservation Overlay therefore requires more than additional policy. It requires a clearer understanding of where planning decisions can most effectively influence long-term outcomes and where guidance can support better decision-making across the region.

This is particularly important in a period of significant economic and social transition. Industries are adapting to changing market conditions, new forms of tourism are emerging, housing pressures are increasing, and communities are evolving. For example, pressures within the wine industry are creating new opportunities and challenges associated with tourism, diversification and value-adding activities. These changes have implications for both character and prosperity and highlight the need for planning frameworks that can respond to change while reinforcing regional identity.

### Character as a Foundation for Future Value

Ultimately, this project seeks to move beyond a purely legal or technical interpretation of character preservation.

It recognises character as a shared regional asset that contributes to community wellbeing, economic prosperity, landscape quality and cultural identity. The project therefore seeks to establish a broader understanding of character that can support future generations, inform planning and development decisions, and strengthen the Barossa's position as a distinctive and resilient region within South Australia.

The resulting frameworks are intended to support a future in which character preservation, economic prosperity and community aspirations are not competing objectives, but mutually reinforcing outcomes.

This report has been informed through a collaborative and iterative process combining literature analysis, strategic review, workshop discussions and Working Group engagement.

The project draws upon a substantial body of previous work undertaken by Council, the Working Group, State Government and the broader community, including:

- strategic planning investigations
- character studies and policy work
- community engagement outcomes
- workshop discussions
- legislative and policy frameworks
- existing Planning and Design Code mechanisms

The project does not seek to duplicate previous strategic work. Rather, it seeks to draw together and interpret existing material through the lens of the contemporary planning environment and current regional conditions.

The methodology combines:

- policy and legislative review
- analysis of historical and strategic material
- Working Group collaboration
- local knowledge and lived experience
- workshop-based discussion and testing of ideas
- review of the relationship between the Character Preservation framework and the Planning and Design Code

This approach recognises that character cannot be understood solely through technical planning policy. The project therefore considers both formal planning mechanisms and the broader social, environmental, economic and cultural systems that collectively contribute to regional identity.

The process has also sought to maintain flexibility as themes and insights emerged through discussion, recognising that many aspects of character are interconnected and not easily isolated within traditional planning categories.

## 4.1 Leading Practice and Innovation

The project has been informed by contemporary thinking relating to regional planning, landscape stewardship and place-responsive development.

A recurring theme throughout the review was recognition that character extends beyond individual buildings or isolated development outcomes. Character emerges through relationships between environmental systems, landscape, settlement patterns, productive land, movement networks, tourism activity and community identity over time.

The work also identified the importance of considering:

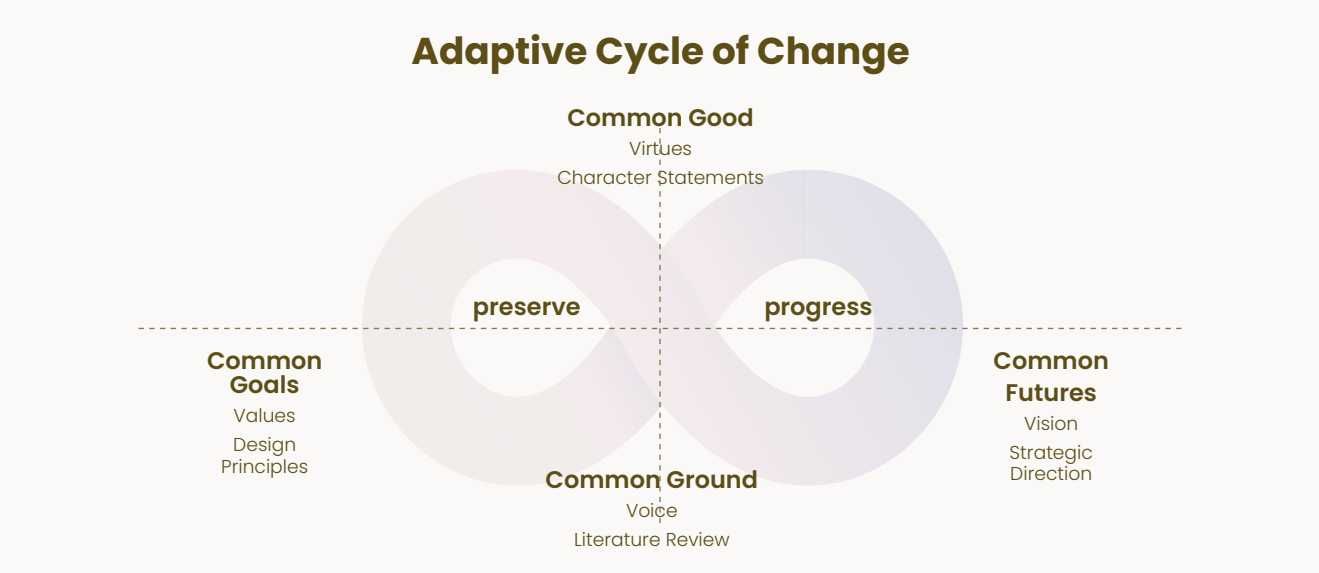
- the relationship between strategic vision and practical implementation mechanisms
- long-term regional outcomes rather than short-term individual decisions
- cumulative change across landscapes and townships
- the interaction between environmental, economic and community systems
- the importance of productive landscapes as part of regional identity
- the role of tourism in both supporting and influencing character

The project recognises that regional character is not static. The Barossa will continue to "evolve with integrity" in response to changing environmental conditions, agricultural practices, economic drivers and community expectations.

Accordingly, the work has sought to explore approaches capable of supporting ongoing adaptation and resilience while reinforcing the qualities that contribute to the Barossa's distinct identity and sense of place.

### Evolving the Culture of Planning

Character preservation cannot be achieved through planning policy alone. It requires new ways of working that combine community knowledge, design thinking, systems thinking and collaborative governance toward a **character-led, regenerative model and building institutional capability**. The following three frameworks describe the capabilities developed through this project—from defining regional character, to integrating it into planning and investment, to enabling long-term institutional change.



## 4.2 Define, Align, Design

Top Quality

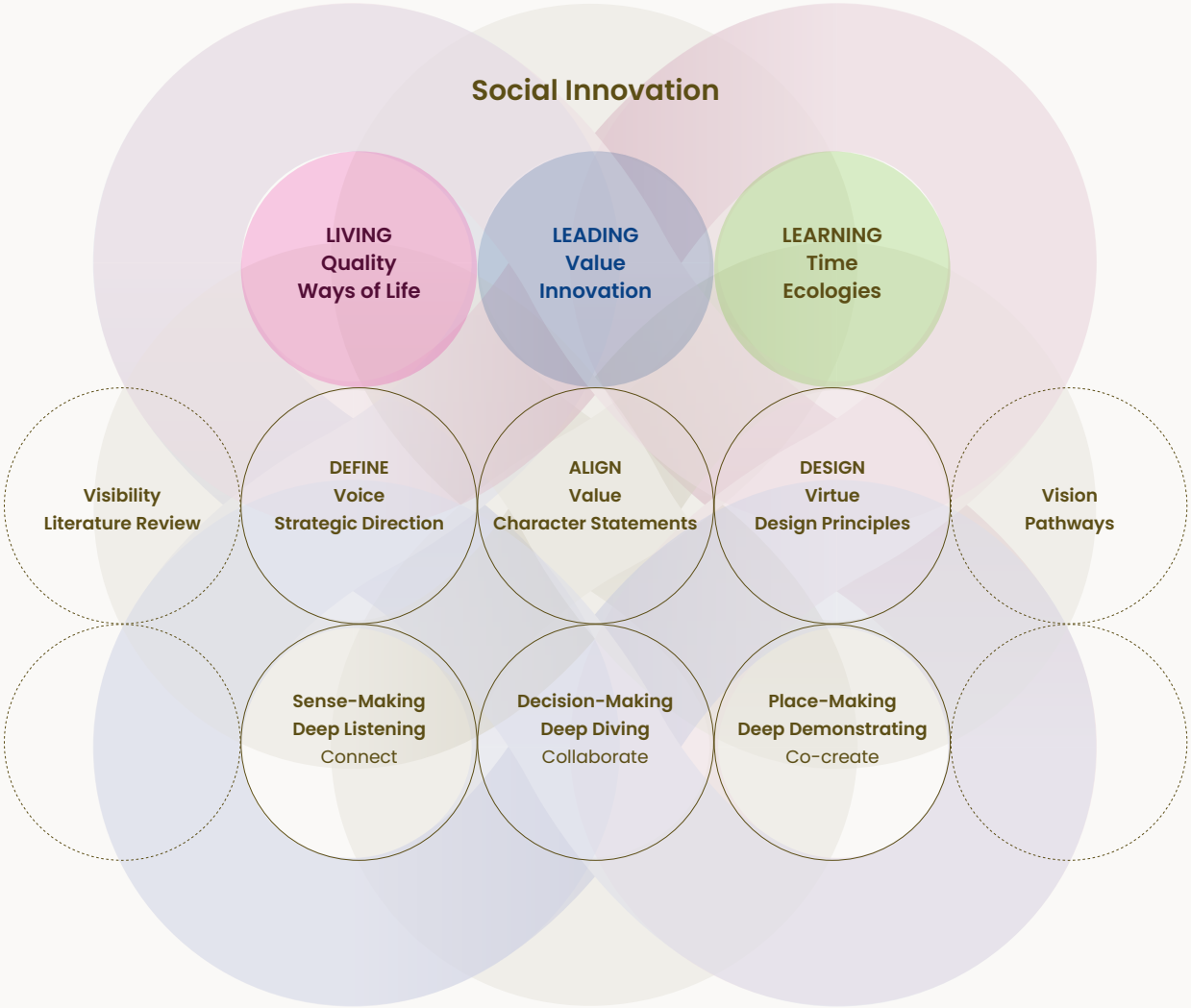
Middle Out

Bottom Up

**Building Shared Understanding.**

*Character Begins with listening. This stage focused on building a shared understanding of the Barossa's distinctive character through community participation, research and collaborative design. Rather than beginning with policy, the process sought to define common values, align diverse perspectives and translate local knowledge into a shared strategic direction. The outcome is a stronger foundation for future planning decisions grounded in community aspirations.*

| Community | Co-created / Co-owned | Community valued |
|---|---|---|
| *Providing mutual benefits and new value* | *Orchestrating broad and deep team work and partnerships* | *Designing relevant and responsible places and spaces* |




**From Community Knowledge to Shared Direction**

*The framework progresses from understanding to alignment to co-design. Community knowledge is first gathered through listening and research, then translated into shared values and character statements before informing design principles and future directions. Each stage builds on the previous one, creating a common language for decision-making.*

## 4.3 Design, Planning, Development

Landscape

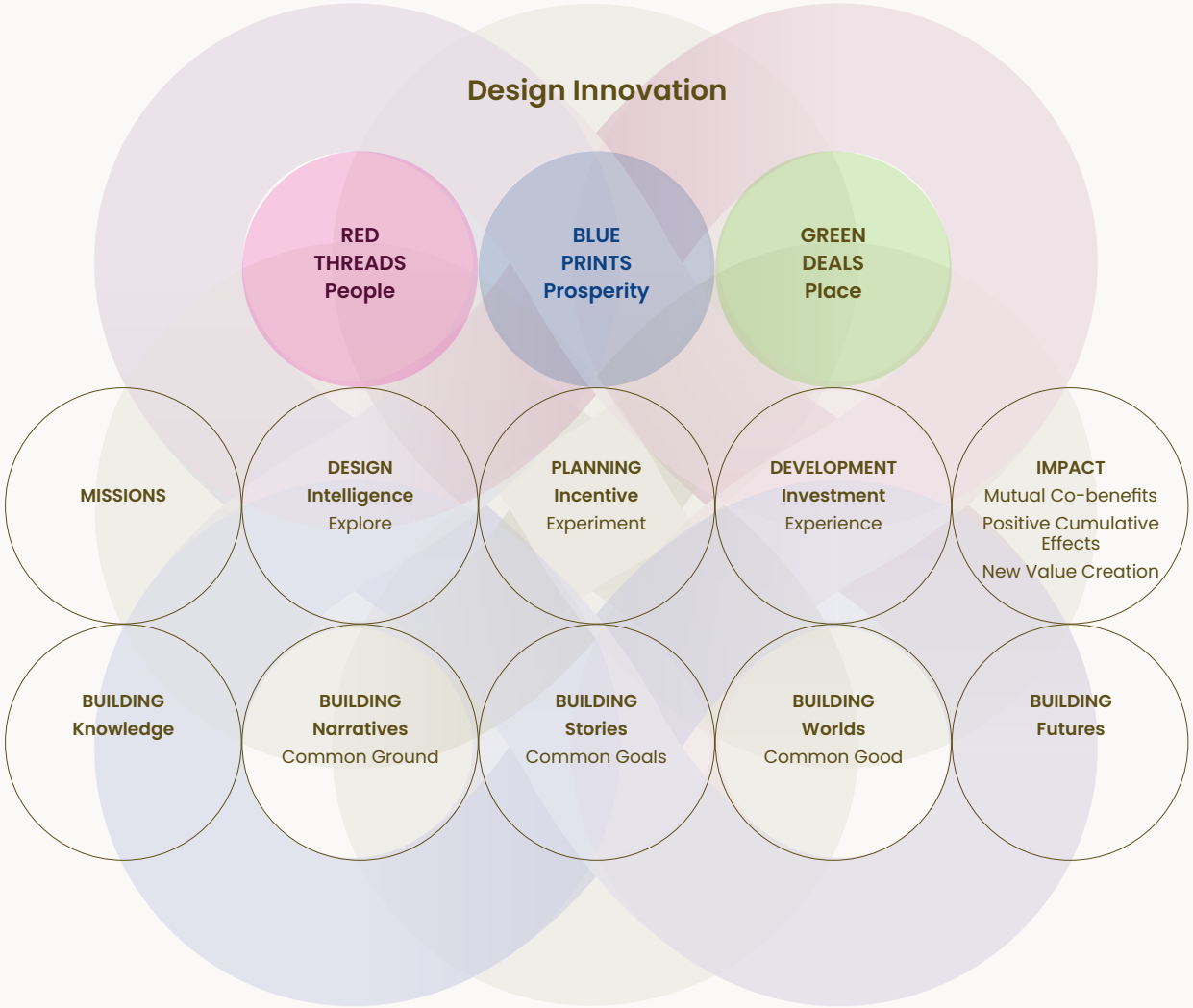
Built Form

People

**Integrating Design, Planning and Investment**

*Character becomes influential when it shapes investment and decision-making. This framework demonstrates how design thinking, planning and development can reinforce one another through three complementary forms of intelligence: relational intelligence (People), systems intelligence (Prosperity) and ecological intelligence (Place). Rather than treating design, planning and development as separate disciplines, the framework integrates them into a collaborative process capable of delivering long-term regional outcomes.*

| Multi-perspective generated | Growth inspired | Agency driven |
|---|---|---|
| *Integrating disciplines, generations, + cultures* | *Provoking new ways of thinking, being, doing* | *Fostering individual and collective action* |




**Translating Character into Action**

*The process begins by establishing a shared mission and understanding of place before progressively informing design exploration, planning innovation and investment decisions. Together these activities generate mutually reinforcing environmental, economic and social benefits capable of creating enduring regional value.*

## 4.4 Translation, Transition, Transformation

Systems

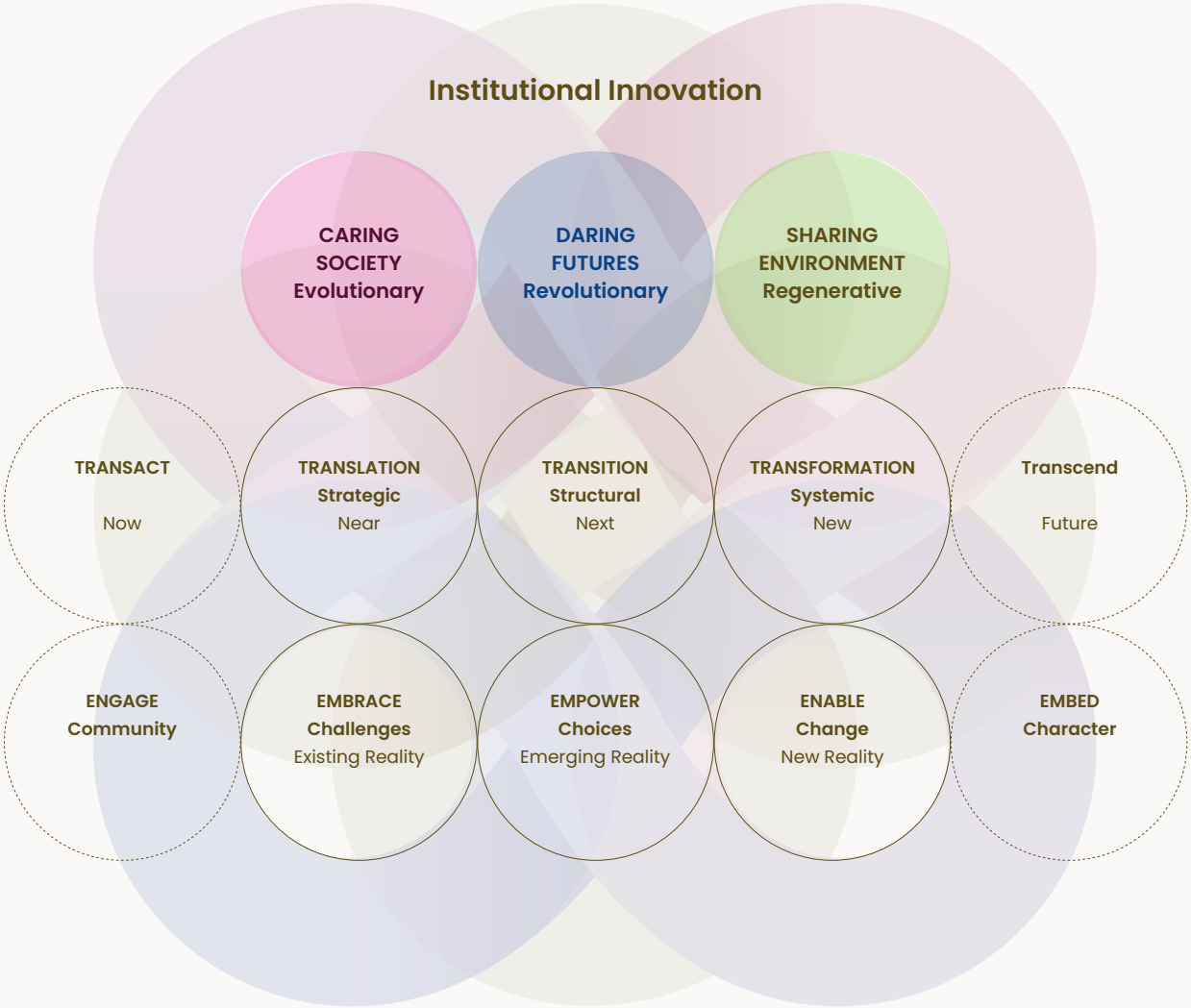
Structures

Strategies

**Building Capacity for Long-Term Change**

*Long-term change requires more than good ideas—it requires institutions capable of learning and adapting over time. This framework illustrates how strategic intent is progressively translated into practical action through increasing levels of capability. Beginning with community engagement and existing conditions, the process supports experimentation, organisational learning and collaborative governance before embedding successful practices into enduring planning systems.*

| Mission oriented | Future focused | Innovation led |
|---|---|---|
| *Addressing complex system challenges* | *Committing to long-term outcomes* | *Building transformational pathways* |




**From Strategy to Transformation**

*Rather than proposing a fixed implementation plan, the framework establishes an adaptive pathway that supports continuous learning. Each stage increases the capacity of government, industry and the community to respond to emerging challenges while maintaining the distinctive character of the Barossa.*

Systems don't change if there is no clear narrative that gives people a meaningful way to rethink of themselves, what they value and how they interact with each other.

Gina Belle

# 5. Mission Mapping



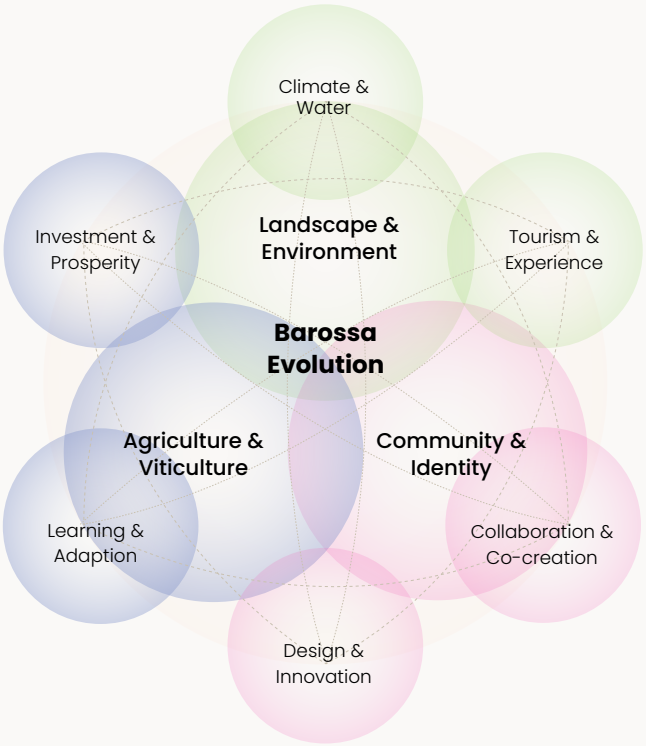



## 4. Approach

## 5. Mission Mapping

5.1 Barossa Tastings
5.2 Barossa Pairings
5.3 Barossa Blending
5.4 Barossa Portrait (Doughnut Economics)

## 6. Strategic Directions




## Working Group Workshop 18 May 2026

This section translates the Working Group's collective knowledge into an integrated design framework. It demonstrates how deep listening, participation and synthesis can generate shared intelligence, establishing the foundations for an ongoing "Barossa Design Review and Stewardship" process that guides future planning, decision-making and regional evolution.

**Collectively, the workshop findings suggest a fundamental shift:**

From preservation to stewardship.

From protection to leadership.

From regulation to guidance.

From static heritage to living character.

From growth versus character to shared prosperity through character.

From diverse interests to unity without uniformity.

From aspirational values to practical implementation.

These insights establish the strategic foundation upon which the subsequent framework synthesis is built, providing the rationale for a design-led, place-based approach to managing growth, identity and long-term prosperity in the Barossa.

**Frameworks Foundations Summary**

The responses suggest frameworks centred on:

**Growth with Character**

→ enabled by Design Excellence
→ grounded in Place Identity and Heritage
→ supported by Livability and Community Wellbeing
→ strengthened through Sustainability and Climate Resilience
→ delivered through Clear Governance and Planning
→ generating Economic Prosperity and Tourism Benefits.

This hierarchy provides a strong structure for strategic planning frameworks foundations because it moves from the overarching challenge of managing growth to the key enabling principles and desired outcomes of place-based identity, quality design, and long-term regeneration.

# 5. Mission Mapping

## Workshop Findings

### 1. From Preservation to Stewardship

Discussions reflect a transition away from preservation as a defensive or restrictive concept towards stewardship as an active, future-focused approach.

- The challenge is how its values can be translated into contemporary planning and governance systems.
- Stewardship requires carrying forward accumulated knowledge while adapting for future generations.
- Character and identity should evolve through careful management rather than remain static.

### 2. From Protection to Positive Regional Leadership

The Barossa is viewed not as a region seeking protection from change, but as a region capable of demonstrating leadership in place-based development.

- The focus should be on developing practical models that integrate growth, prosperity and identity.
- The Barossa can serve as a leading example of regional stewardship, governance and place-based planning.
- The objective is to create approaches that others can learn from and adapt.

### 3. Guiding Change Over Regulating Development

The emphasis is shifting from regulatory control towards strategic guidance.

- Instead, the focus is "How do we guide change in ways that strengthen identity over time?"
- Existing values and aspirations are largely understood; the challenge is implementation.
- The need is for frameworks that enable appropriate investment, development and prosperity.

### 4. Character as a Living and Systems Concept

Character extends beyond physical appearance and heritage assets -- it is visual, social, cultural and relational.

- It is expressed through community values, behaviours and connections as much as through built form.
- Character preservation should support long-term human wellbeing.
- Identity is defined by both inherited legacy and future aspirations

### 5. Shared Prosperity as a Regional Objective

Economic development and character preservation are viewed as mutually reinforcing, not competing objectives.

- Prosperity should generate broad regional and State benefits.
- Economic value should flow through communities rather than become concentrated.
- Growth should strengthen collective wellbeing.

### 6. Unity Without Uniformity

The Barossa's strength lies in its diversity, and governance should recognise and embrace that diversity.

- A shared regional vision does not require homogeneity.
- Different communities, perspectives and values contribute to the region's overall identity.
- Effective governance should create alignment while respecting local distinctiveness.

### 7. A Need for Translation and Implementation

The challenge is not the absence of values or vision, but the incomplete translation into planning systems.

- Regional aspirations have existed for decades.
- Existing planning mechanisms do not fully express these aspirations.
- Greater clarity, certainty and shared expectations are required.

**Time is critical as broader planning reforms continue to evolve.**

## Mapping Foundations

### 1. Growth and Change Management

Accommodate growth while maintaining the qualities that define the Barossa.

#### 1.1 Balancing Growth and Character

- Growth can support economic resilience and local prosperity.
- Growth should strengthen existing communities and businesses.
- New development should be tailored to local context rather than applied uniformly.

#### 1.2 Growth Management

- Growth should not diminish township character or scale.
- Housing and increased density must be integrated sensitively.
- Development should reinforce regional identity.

### 2. Place Identity, Heritage and Character

Protect and enhance the distinctive qualities that make the Barossa unique.

#### 2.1 Local Identity

- Planning decisions should be grounded in local context.
- Regional identity is a key asset and competitive advantage.
- Community character should guide future development.

#### 2.2 Heritage Conservation and Adaptation

- Heritage contributes to identity and economic value.
- Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings is encouraged.
- Heritage should be viewed as an active component of growth, not a constraint.

#### 2.3 Township Character

- Maintain the scale and form of existing settlements.

### 3. Design Excellence

Design quality is fundamental to achieving successful growth outcomes.

#### 3.1 Design-Led Development

- High-quality design should be a central planning objective.
- Good architecture and urban design support community wellbeing.
- Early design intervention reduces future planning and development issues.

#### 3.2 Outcome-Based Assessment

- Assessment should focus on quality outcomes rather than rigid designation.
- Flexibility should be maintained where quality outcomes can be demonstrated.

### 4. Livability and Community Wellbeing

Maintain and enhance the qualities that support community life.

#### 4.1 Protecting Liveability

- Livability is a defining characteristic of the Barossa.
- Access to amenities, vineyards, landscapes, and local food should be maintained.

#### 4.2 Housing and Community Needs

- Housing supply should respond to existing and future communities.
- Density should be balanced with design quality and local character.
- Community wellbeing should remain central to planning decisions.

### 5. Sustainability and Climate Resilience

Future development must respond to environmental realities and long-term resilience.

#### 5.1 Sustainability Requirements

- Stronger sustainability standards are needed for development.
- Environmental performance should become a more prominent planning consideration.

#### 5.2 Climate Adaptation

- Planning and development should reflect climate change realities.
- Long-term resilience should be embedded in growth strategies.

### 6. Governance, Planning and Certainty

Planning systems should provide clarity, consistency and confidence.

#### 6.1 Policy Certainty

- Greater certainty is required for applicants, investors and the community.
- Clear planning expectations support better development outcomes.

#### 6.2 Community Engagement

- Ongoing engagement is needed to understand community values and landscape drivers.
- Decision-making should be informed by local knowledge and aspirations.

### 7. Economic Development and Tourism

Economic growth should reinforce regional identity and prosperity.

#### 7.1 Tourism as Valued Regional Experience

- The value of the visitor economy should be better recognised and communicated.
- New investment should complement and strengthen existing local enterprises.
- Infrastructure investment can enhance visitation and visitor experiences.
- Tourism should be mutually reinforcing to productive landscapes

## Workshop Canvases Become Mission Maps

The following pages are an interpretation canvases populated by Working Group during a full day workshop. Strategically, these are considered "mission maps" labelled in the spirit of repeated themes that day -- "terroir", "pangea" and "genius loci" -- all of which express deeply embedded experiences of the Barossa or sprit of place

### 1. Barossa Tastings
Literature Review

Every region accumulates knowledge over time through studies, reports, policies and lived experience. Yet valuable insights often remain fragmented across disciplines, organisations and projects. This review brings those diverse perspectives together, not as another summary of literature, but as a process of listening to the collective intelligence that already exists about the Barossa.

Rather than seeking a single answer, the review identifies recurring themes, tensions, opportunities and patterns emerging across planning, landscape, economy, heritage, community and governance. It distinguishes what is already known, what has been tested in practice, where important gaps remain and where new opportunities may emerge.

Like a tasting of many wines, each source contributes its own perspective. Together they reveal a richer understanding of regional character than any individual document alone. This synthesis begins to establish a common base that informs the Character Assessment Framework and the strategic directions that follow.

### 2. Barossa Pairings
Character Statements

Every region is defined by productive tensions. The Barossa has never been shaped by choosing one future over another, but by balancing continuity with change, heritage with innovation, local identity with global influence, and environmental stewardship with economic prosperity.

These paired narratives do not represent competing interests to be resolved. They represent complementary qualities that must continue to evolve together if the region is to remain distinctive and resilient.

The Character Statements translate these productive dualities into a common regional language. They do not prescribe fixed outcomes; they describe the enduring qualities that give the Barossa its identity while recognising that every generation contributes to its ongoing evolution.

Together they provide a common frame for decision-making across planning, investment, design and governance—helping diverse stakeholders understand what should be protected and how thoughtful change can strengthen regional character over time.

### 3. Barossa Blending
Strategic Directions

Understanding regional character is only valuable when it informs better decisions. These Strategic Directions translate the shared understanding developed throughout the report into practical pathways for action.

Each direction begins with a regional opportunity before identifying a clear value proposition, catalytic actions, measurable benefits, emerging capabilities and the long-term legacy that investment can create. This approach recognises that successful regional development goes far beyond delivering projects toward building confidence, partnerships and institutional capability over time.

Like the blending process, each strategic direction complements and reinforces the others. Together they create an integrated portfolio of initiatives that balance environmental stewardship, economic resilience, cultural continuity and community wellbeing.

These directions suggest new narratives and provide a practical roadmap for coordinated investment in the future capacity of the Barossa.

### 4. Barossa Portrait (Doughnut Economics)
Design Principles

The Barossa Portrait brings together the ideas explored throughout this report into a single integrated framework. It recognises that regional character emerges through the systemic interaction of landscape, culture, governance, economy and community.

At its centre are the enduring social foundations that support every successful region. Around these sit the economic and environmental systems that create resilience, prosperity and long-term stewardship. Together they form a regenerative model where ecological capability, institutional capacity and community relationships continually reinforce one another.

The supporting design principles translate this systems perspective into practical guidance for planning, design and investment. They encourage decisions that are locally grounded while remaining adaptive to future challenges.

The framework provides an operating system for regeneration—helping every decision contribute to a more resilient, prosperous and distinctive Barossa.

## 5.1 Barossa Tastings
Literature Review

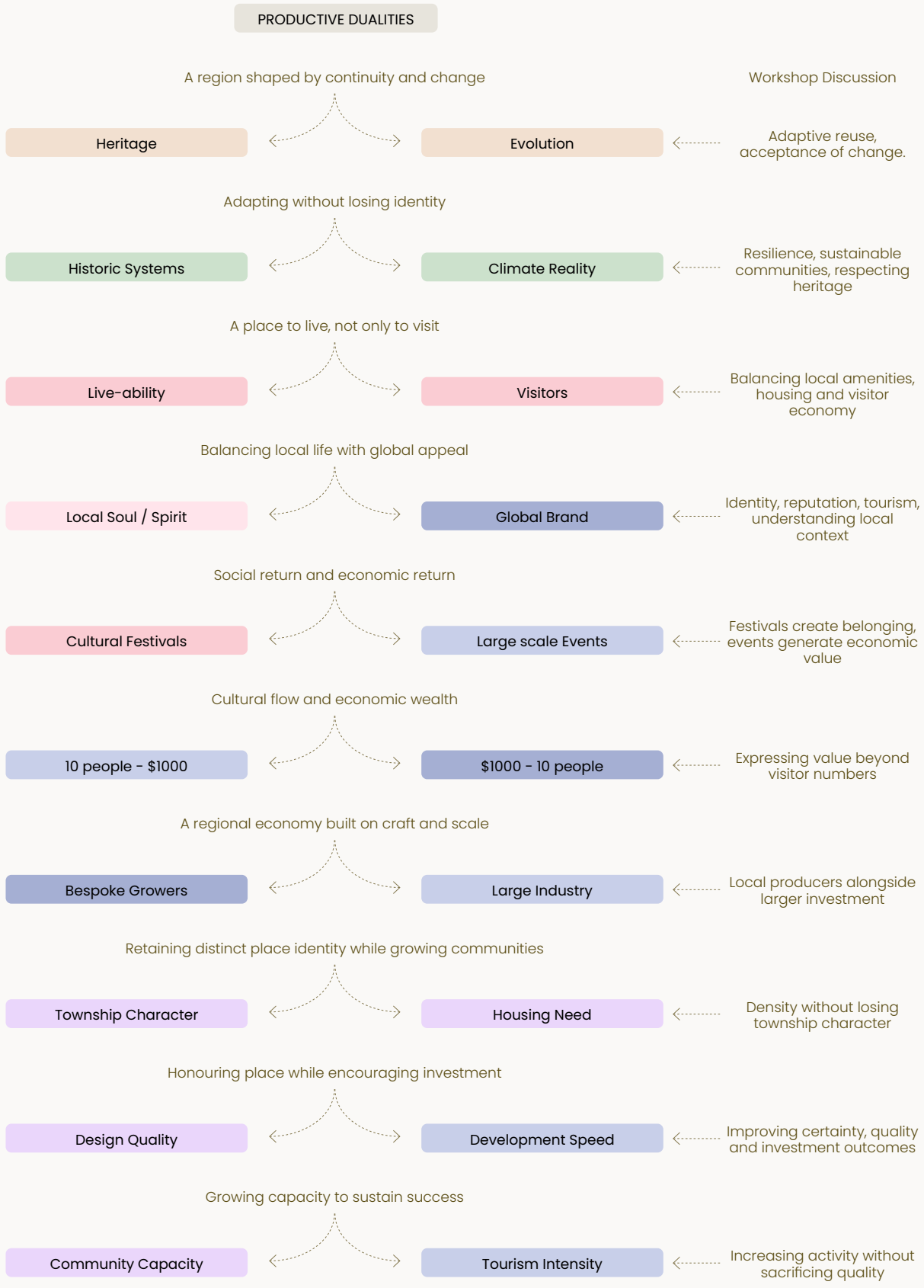
Voice
Common Ground

### Workshop Findings Matrix

| Theme | Show | Know | Throw | Grow |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Landscape, Environment & Productive Land** | • Barossa landscapes / ranges, maginicent nature, trees<br>• Working agrarian / agriculture landscape<br>• Scenic vistas – local roads, unique landscapes • Open vineyard landscape, connection to rolling hills • Biodiversity, green spaces | • Terroir - climate, valley, ranges, land division patterns<br>• Regional landscapes, cyclical economics<br>• Agricultural resilience, revenue growth<br>• Climate resilience, landscape adaptatio<br>• Meaning of scenic values | • Land uses that don't contribute to character<br>• Negative visual impact on key landscape features<br>• Urban sprawl and fringe growth that compromises agricultural land<br>• Moon-like landscape within urban areas | • Value of food growing and regenerative landscapes<br>• Contiguous landscapes<br>• Balance between growth and industrial productivity<br>• Water sensitive township and urban design |
| **2. Townships, Built Form & Growth Management** | • Individual towns + architectural style with their own history • Sparsity of structures (outside towns)<br>• Green open space as a village feature<br>• Sense of place – infrastructure and local character in Barossa | • Connection of built form to the landscape<br>• Value of the Barossa region & reference to suburban region<br>• Region where the CP is viewed as a strength, not a constraint | • Generic building designs  Barossa specific<br>• Housing on tiny rural lots<br>• Industry encroaching into towns<br>• Big box retail impacting character values<br>• Vehicle dominance and large road infrastructure<br>• User-generated sheds | • Design guidance particularly related to growth and topography<br>• Regional housing within township zones<br>• Density in appropriate locations<br>• Regional hubs<br>• Walkability<br>• Transport train |
| **3. Heritage, Identity & Sense of Place** | • Cultural heritage<br>• German authenticity<br>• Heritage and the built fabric<br>• European migrant history<br>• Connection and identity to the region | • German heritage and generations<br>• Attachment to intergenerational landscapes<br>• Appeciation of the uniqueness of the Barossa | • Incremental loss of rural landscape character | • Restoration of old buildings<br>• Adaptive reuse / heritage projects<br>• Heritage awareness of connection with old buildings on rural land.<br>• Adapt / maintain connection to heritage and place<br>• Regional precinct-based identities |
| **4. Community, Culture & Social Wellbeing** | • Future generations opportunities to connect with strong social fabric | • Pressures to life and well-being • Parts of the community that aren't engaged • Experiences | • Idea that planning policy can solve all issues | • Communities that know each other<br>• Cultural activities, school sports, market<br>• Sport and recreation<br>• More activities for families<br>• Cultural / arts practice<br>• 600 metre communities i.e walking |
| **5. Tourism, Economy & Regional Prosperity** | • Economic boundaries linked to food production and new housing | • Growth and value of diversified GI's<br>• Barossa viewed as a leader in achieving economic prosperity from protected landscapes, heritage tourism, authentic tourism, experiences and not mass tourism.<br>• Continue to be recognised as a world-class food and wine region. | • Medium and large-scale tourism accommodation that has no connection to primary production (agri-food).<br>• Tourist accommodation on rural land should be restricted to minimum value land size<br>• Tourism accommodation should not impact landscape values | • Tourism development should support primary production<br>• Tourism and farming need better integration<br>• Value of local food and beverage offerings (agri-business products)<br>• Restaurant / culinary focus<br>• Trails and tourism<br>• Leverage to encourage intensive operators to invest in the region (long term adaptation) |
| **6. Governance, Participation & Decision-Making** | • Particular land use/ development in one area may have more impact than another area | • Understand community values and expectations around heritage and growth<br>• Perspectives that narrow our thinking – then invite people to fill those gaps<br>• Modern thinking community that always has the people in the heart of our decision making | • Planning policy is inconsistent: Residential homes on rural land is strictly restricted to rural land and of a minimum size<br>• A huge anomaly exists. Large-scale medium scale tourist accommodation can be built on a smaller rural land size, where houses are prohibited<br>• Tourist accommodation on rural land should be restricted to minimum value land size. Policy must articulate this and not leave it 'discretionary' zone | • Understanding of regional purpose<br>• Comprehensive community engagement<br>• Responsive policy<br>• Integrated smart planning<br>• Continuous monitoring |
| **7. Future Growth, Infrastructure & Adaptation** | | • How will the 'Barossa' change with the shortening of the wine industry?<br>• How does the water ecosystem play into thinking?<br>• Are we to be a commuter belt?<br>• Barossa values of the settlement district & how they may change future.<br>• Adaptability, custodianship, sustainability<br>• Impact on short-term code inclusivity | • Expanding built form to allow farming to continue | • Adapt to and work with Concordia growth<br>• Understand the impact of 15,000 new residents to the area<br>• Infrastructure / connection.<br>• Infrastructure required to open up housing land in eastern smaller township to make them appealing for families<br>• More relatively underdeveloped "hills"<br>• Respond to growth in a considered way for small towns that have not been serviced. |

## 5.2 Barossa Pairings
Character Statements

Virtues
Common Good



## 5.3 Barossa Blending
Strategic Direction

Series of narrative questions posed to the Working Group

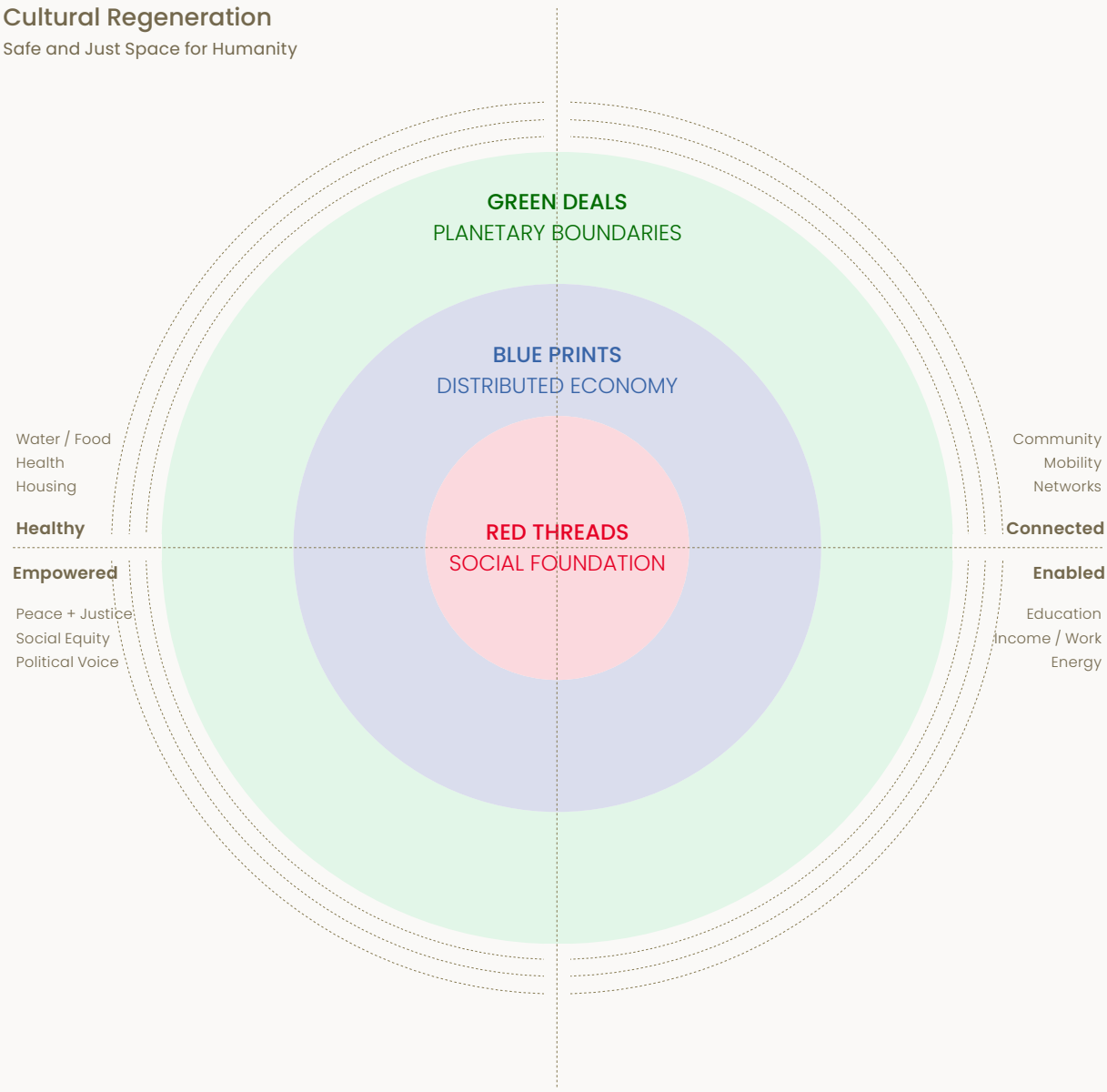
| The challenge or opportunity we are seeking to address and why this is important in relation to the outcomes we are trying to achieve | **If we** begin to make just transitions, for this purpose,<br>*What will we do?* | **By** the actions we propose as part of the process, to advance this transition,<br>*What are the ways we will do it?* | **By** the actions we propose as part of the process, to advance this transition,<br>*What are the ways we will do it?* |
|---|---|---|---|

| Strategic Direction | Regional Opportunity | Value Proposition | Catalytic Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Landscape Character**<br>*Understand* | Create a shared understanding of the Barossa's landscape character as the foundation for future prosperity. | A common language for recognising and communicating regional value. | Develop collaborative character frameworks, shared evidence and participatory planning. |
| **2. Regional Identity**<br>*Align* | Strengthen the Barossa's identity while creating opportunities for future generations. | A place people choose to live, work, invest and belong. | Support local leadership, education, innovation and cultural expression. |
| **3. Policy Clarity**<br>*Enable* | Create a planning system that enables better decisions with greater certainty. | Clear expectations for applicants, communities and government. | Shared policy, character assessment, monitoring and continual learning. |
| **4. Aligned Investment**<br>*Invest* | Align public and private investment around shared regional priorities. | Confidence for investors, government and communities. | Character-led investment frameworks, partnerships and strategic infrastructure. |
| **5. Heritage + Place**<br>*Deliver* | Protect heritage by enabling its continued contribution to contemporary life. | Living heritage rather than static preservation. | Adaptive reuse, stewardship, interpretation and place-based investment. |
| **6. Regional Capacity**<br>*Sustain* | Invest in the people, institutions and knowledge that enable long-term stewardship. | Build the capability needed to continually strengthen regional character. | Learning networks, research partnerships, leadership development and knowledge sharing. |

| | **This will evolve into** the outcomes we seek, as results from these actions. *What will be the measurable, near term (tangible + visible) direct and indirect co-benefits?* | **And eventually** these are the outcomes we aim to achieve over time. *What are the shared learnings, positive effects & enduring new values?* | **Systemic Outcomes** *What are the broad impacts our work will contribute to, and what is the change we wish to enable?* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Early Benefits | Emerging Capability | Long-term Legacy | |
| | Greater trust, confidence and consistent decision-making. | Regional learning, innovation and stewardship. | An internationally recognised landscape where protection and prosperity reinforce one another. | |
| | Greater housing diversity, skilled employment and community participation. | A confident, resilient and adaptive regional identity. | A region recognised globally because it remains authentic locally. | Sharing Environments |
| | Reduced conflict, greater certainty and higher quality decisions. | Responsive governance that evolves with evidence. | Planning trusted as a catalyst for regional stewardship. | |
| | Higher quality projects with reduced planning conflict. | Coordinated regional investment. | Investment that continually strengthens regional character and prosperity. | Daring Futures |
| | Historic places remain useful, loved and economically viable. | Heritage becomes an active regional asset. | Character grows stronger through each generation. | |
| | Growing local expertise and stronger collaboration. | A region able to adapt without losing identity. | Future generations inherit the capacity—not simply the responsibility—to care for the Barossa. | Caring Societies |

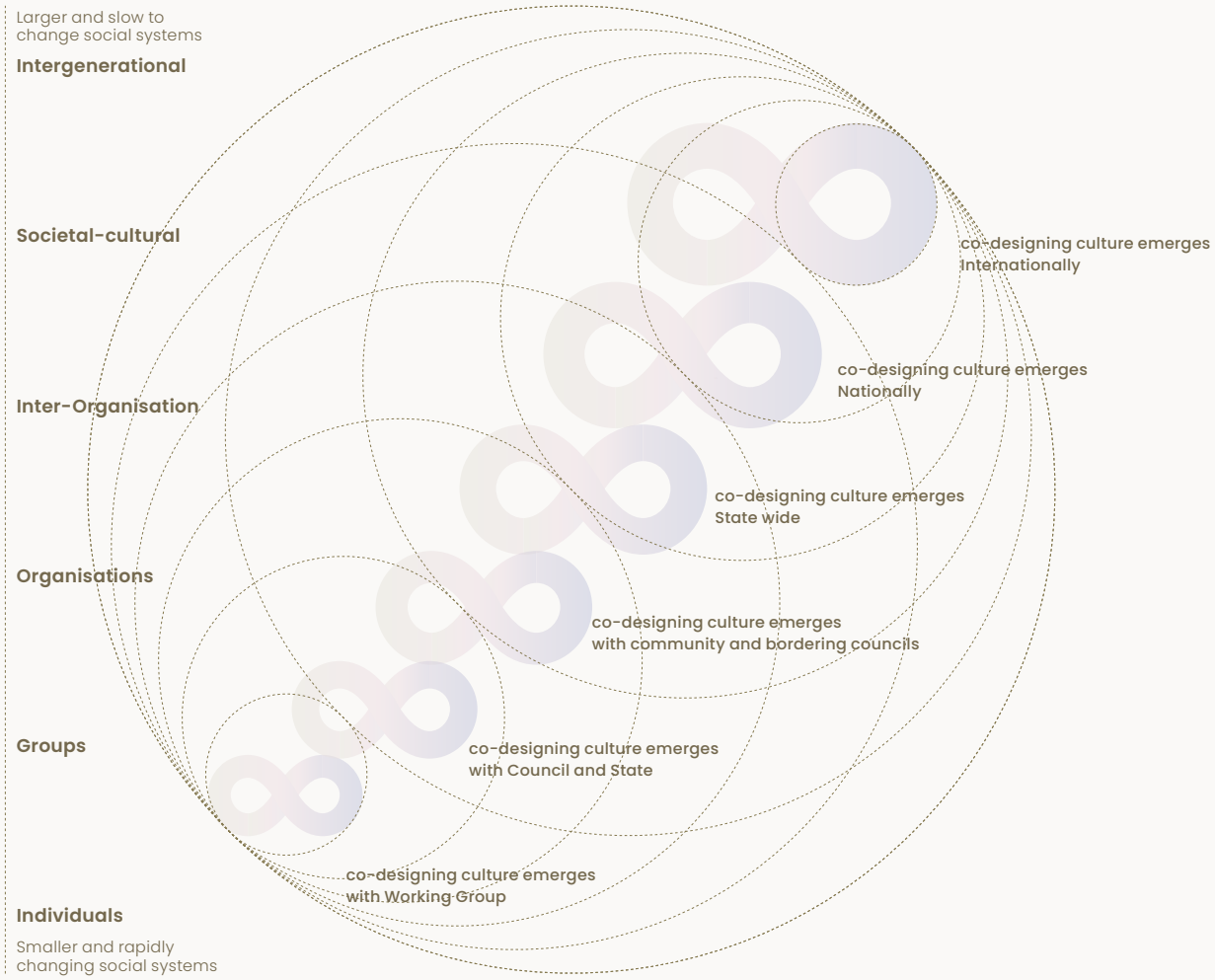
## 5.4 Barossa Portrait (Doughnut Economics)

Design Principles




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Natural & Rural Landscape & Scenic Amenity | Agriculture, Viticultural & Associated Industries | Built form and Townships & Relationships to Land |
| Water | Viable Agricultural Businesses | Housing Affordabiltiy |
| Biodiversity | Agri-diversity | Enabling Infrastructure |
| Soils | Labour Force | Adaptive Reuse |
| Vegetation | Co-Investment & Transformational Capital | Community & Identity Authenticity & Integrity |
| Green Energy | | |
| Wastewater / Waste | Land Carrying Capacity | Security |
| | Population Capacity | Belonging / Connection |
| | District Employment Capacity | Recreation |

## Co-designing Culture




# Seeding Culture from the Ground Up

**Regional transformation does not begin at the regional scale. It begins with a small group changing the way they work together, and when those relationships endure, the culture propagates through progressively larger systems.**

Change rarely begins with institutions. It begins with relationships. Every enduring regional transformation starts with a small group willing to work differently, building trust, shared understanding and a common purpose. As these relationships mature they create new ways of working that gradually influence organisations, partnerships, communities and, ultimately, the wider systems in which they operate.

This pattern reflects the adaptive cycle known as panarchy, where innovation emerges at small scales before influencing progressively larger and slower-moving systems. Rather than attempting to change everything at once, it recognises that lasting change grows through successive layers of learning, collaboration and stewardship. Each scale strengthens the next, creating the conditions for new ideas to become accepted practice, policy and culture.

For the Barossa, co-design is therefore more than a project methodology. It is a long-term strategy for cultivating a regional culture capable of adapting together while remaining deeply connected to place, identity and shared purpose.

Dull, inert places, contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. BUT … lively, diverse, intense places contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over the problems and needs outside themselves.

Jane Jacobs

# 6. Strategic Directions





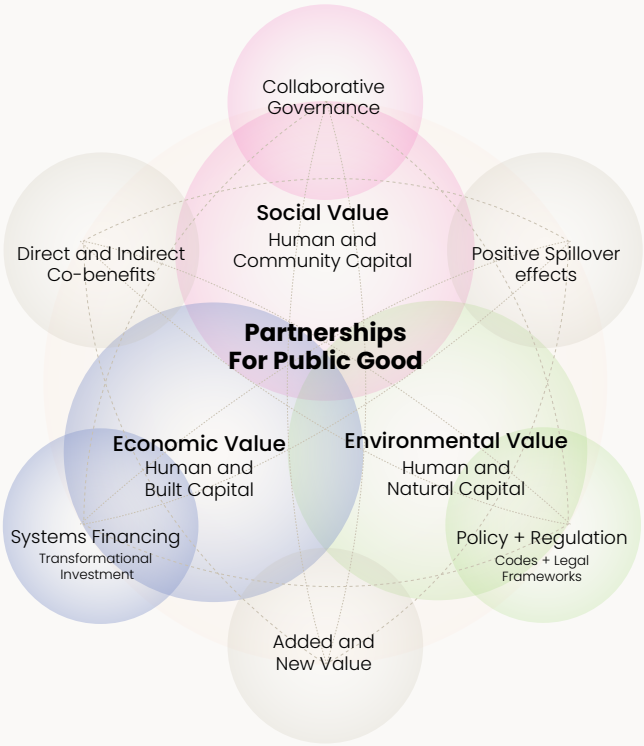


## 4. Approach

## 5. Mission Mapping

## 6. Strategic Directions

6.1 Growing a Living Region
6.2 Barossa Planning at Scale
6.3 Barossa Planning as a System
6.4 Design for Belonging
6.5 Design for Contribution
6.6 Design for Collective Action




## Creating value through collaborative governance

The future of the Barossa cannot be delivered by government alone, nor by industry, community or landholders acting independently. Every enduring achievement in the region has emerged through partnership—between families, neighbours, councils, industries, Traditional Owners and successive generations who understood that the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

Regional character is itself a partnership. It is produced through relationships between landscape, settlement, economy and culture. Protecting that character therefore requires governance that strengthens relationships rather than managing isolated issues.

The Regional Character Strategy proposes a shift from fragmented decision-making toward collaborative stewardship. Planning becomes one participant within a broader regional covenant that aligns public investment, private initiative, community leadership and environmental responsibility around hared outcomes.

Partnership is more than consultation. It is the deliberate creation of public value. It recognises that economic prosperity depends upon healthy landscapes, that environmental resilience depends upon thriving communities, and that cultural identity depends upon people who continue to invest in place together.

When institutions learn to work as one system, every investment creates multiple benefits. Decisions become regenerative. Individual projects become part of a larger regional story. Through partnership, governance becomes capable of creating value that no organisation could achieve alone.

# 6. Strategic Directions

## Strategic Directions for the Future Barossa

The preceding sections have established why regional character matters, how it has been shaped over time, and why existing planning approaches must evolve to respond to future challenges. This sections brings those findings together into a practical strategic direction for the Barossa.

Our recommendation is straightforward. The Barossa should move beyond managing individual development proposals toward actively shaping the long-term character of the region. This requires planning that is coordinated across landscape, settlements and community; informed by evidence and local knowledge; and supported by clear policy, high-quality design and collaborative governance.

We are not proposing a new planning system. This report proposes connecting and leveraging the one that already exists. Many necessary and valuable policies, strategies and institutions are already in place. The opportunity is to align them around a shared understanding of regional character, so that planning decisions, investment priorities and community aspirations work together rather than independently.

The strategic directions presented in this section translate that ambition into an integrated framework for action. They identify the relationships that matter most, reveal where policy and practice can be better connected, and establish a common language for future decision-making. Together they demonstrate how regional character can become an organising principle for planning, design, infrastructure, investment and stewardship.

The direction proposed by this report is to guide change with greater confidence, consistency and purpose. By investing in knowledge, design quality, partnerships and institutional capability, the Barossa can continue to evolve while strengthening the landscape, settlements, communities and industries that define its identity. In doing so, regional character becomes more than a planning consideration—it becomes the foundation for long-term prosperity, resilience and stewardship.

### Recommendations

#### 1. Character should become the organising principle for planning

Character can be an investment framework through which decisions are made.

#### 2. Move from assessment to stewardship

Planning should actively shape cumulative outcomes with and through the community.

#### 3. Connect existing systems

Better alignment of planning, design, infrastructure, investment, environmental management and community knowledge.

#### 4. Invest in regional capability

Design review, research, education, partnerships, monitoring and governance are infrastructure, not optional extras.

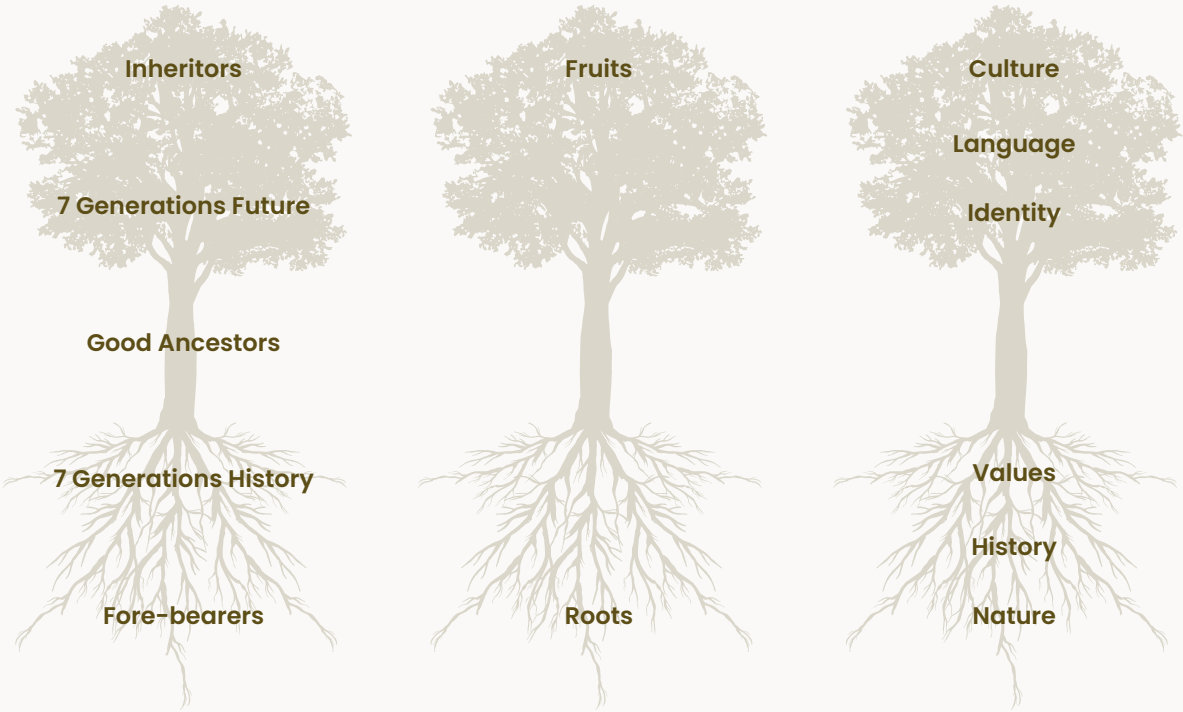
#### 5. Build a living regional knowledge system

Regional character should continuously evolve through learning, evidence and adaptation.

## 6.1 Growing a Living Region

A strategy for building upon inheritance, cultivating relationships and creating enduring culture.

| Heritage | Relationships | Systems |
|---|---|---|
| Natural | Landscape | Environmental |
| Landscapes, Biodiversity | | |
| Built | Built Form | Economic |
| Monuments, Historical Sites | | |
| Cultural | Community | Social |
| Customs, Language | | |




**Building on Foundations**

*What we inherit*

**Building Futures**

*What we cultivate*

**Building Culture**

*What we become*

**The Barossa Region as a Covenant**

Regions are not assembled; they are grown.

Like a tree, every place draws strength from what lies beneath the surface. Deep roots anchor identity in landscape, history and memory. Strong trunks are formed through enduring relationships between people, settlements and the natural systems that sustain them. Healthy canopies create the conditions for new life—producing prosperity, culture, knowledge and opportunity that can be shared across generations.

The Barossa has always been shaped by this living process. Its landscapes, settlements and traditions have evolved together through countless individual decisions made over time. The role of strategy is not to replace these relationships with new systems, but to recognise them, strengthen them and enable them to continue evolving.

This Regional Character Strategy therefore begins with three simple propositions. We build on foundations by understanding what we have inherited. We build futures by investing in the relationships that create regional character. We build culture by ensuring that environmental, social and economic systems reinforce one another rather than compete.

Together these form a regenerative approach to regional development—one that honours the wisdom of previous generations while creating new opportunities for those yet to come. Character is not preserved by resisting change. It is sustained by ensuring that every generation leaves stronger relationships, healthier systems and a richer inheritance than the one it received.

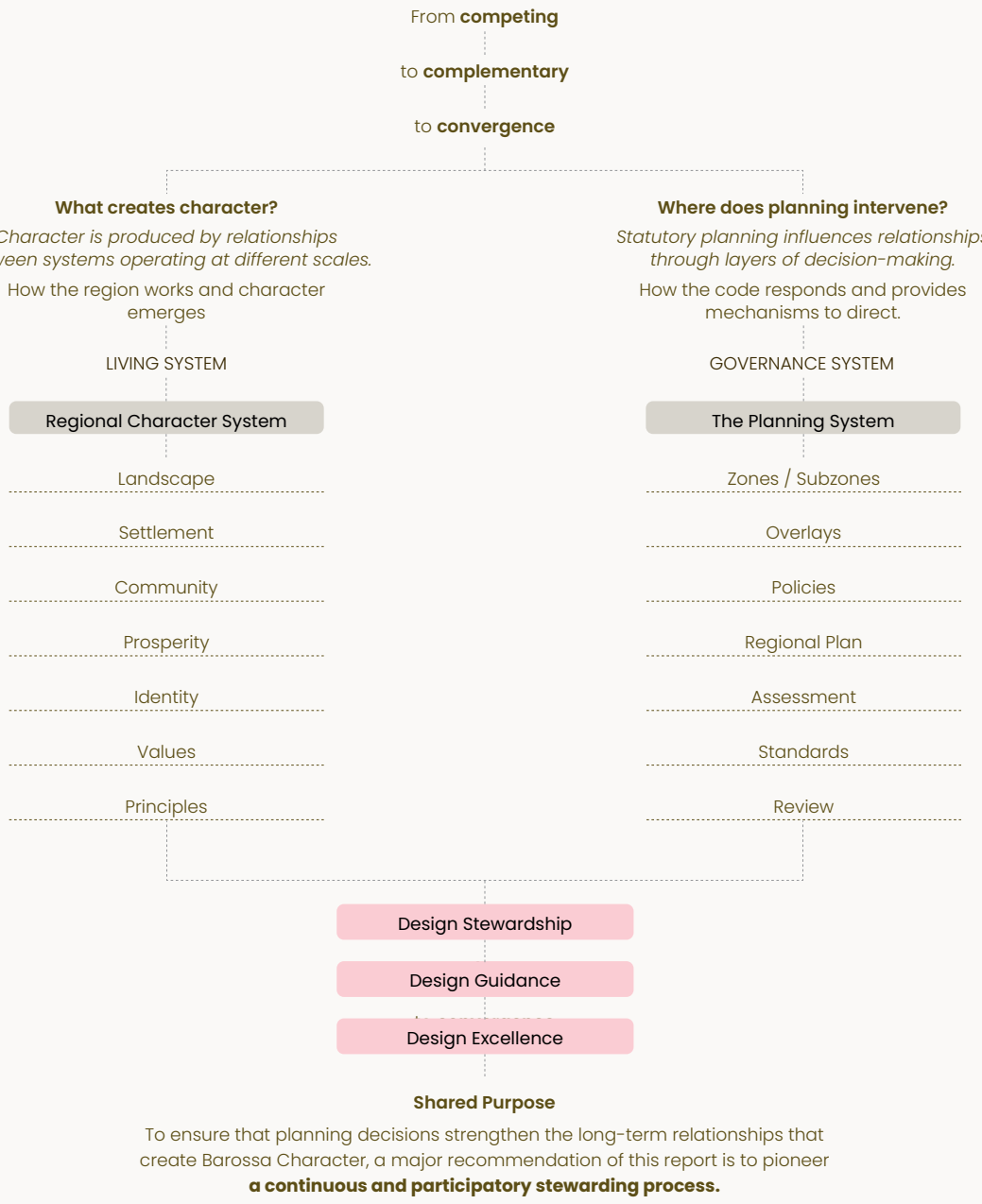
## Connecting Regional Character and Statutory Planning

A framework aligning the living systems of regional character with the governance systems of statutory planning.

Regional character emerges through the ongoing relationships between landscape, settlement, community, economy and culture over time. The statutory planning system cannot create these relationships directly, but it can influence how they evolve through decisions about growth, conservation, investment and design.

This framework demonstrates how the living systems that shape regional character align with the governance mechanisms of the South Australian Planning and Design Code. Rather than operating as separate or competing systems, they become complementary parts of a shared approach to stewardship.

When planning mechanisms are informed by regional identity and guided by enduring principles, regulation moves beyond managing development to strengthening the relationships that sustain place across generations.

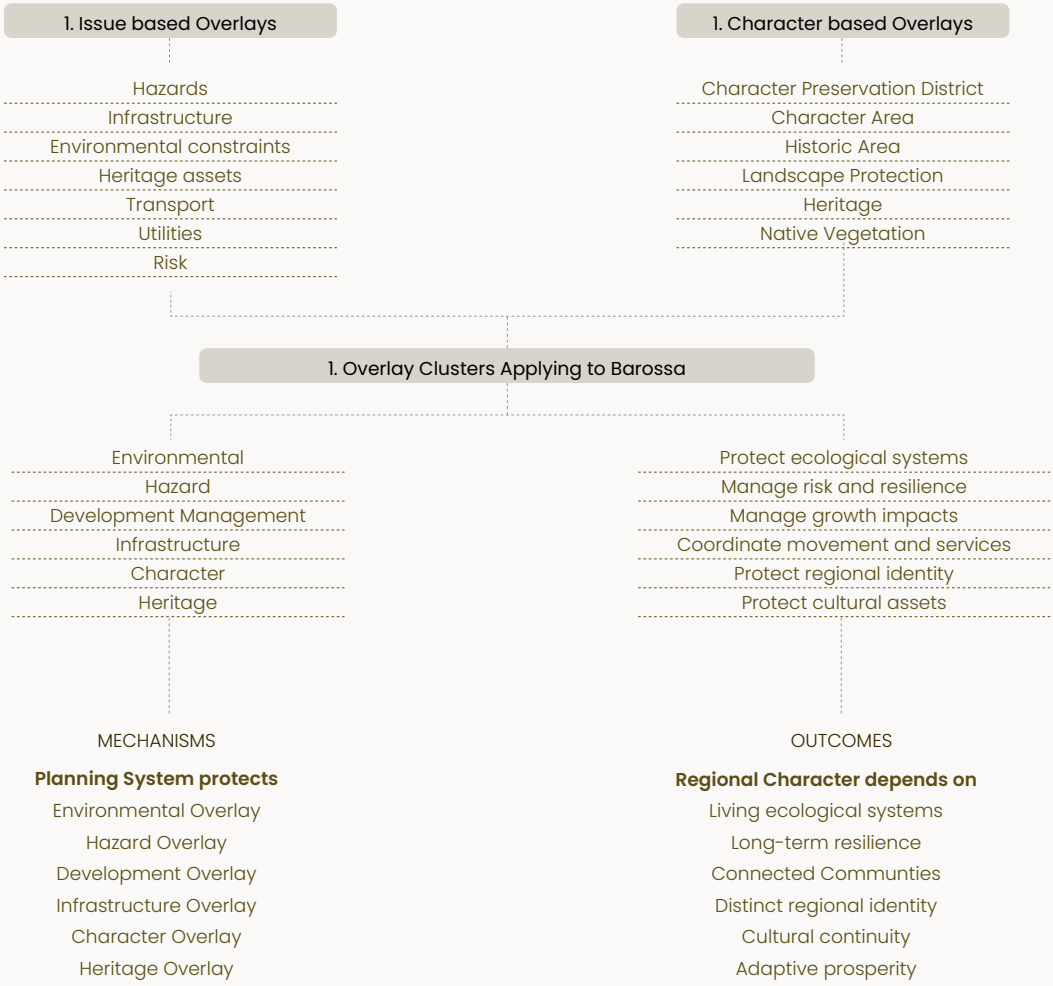


## From Documents to Decisions

Connecting Regional Character through Strategic Mapping

Planning decisions are rarely informed by a single policy or document. They emerge from the interaction of many strategies, statutory controls, technical studies and community values that have accumulated over time. Individually these documents provide important guidance, but collectively they describe a much larger system of relationships -- illustrated below by the general and specific-to-Barossa overlays and policies.

The strategic maps that follow translate this complexity into a connected visual framework. They reveal how ideas converge, where priorities reinforce one another, and where important gaps remain. Together they create a shared language for understanding regional character across landscape, settlements and community. This provides the foundation for moving beyond compliance toward coordinated stewardship, enabling future planning decisions to be understood as part of a coherent regional system.

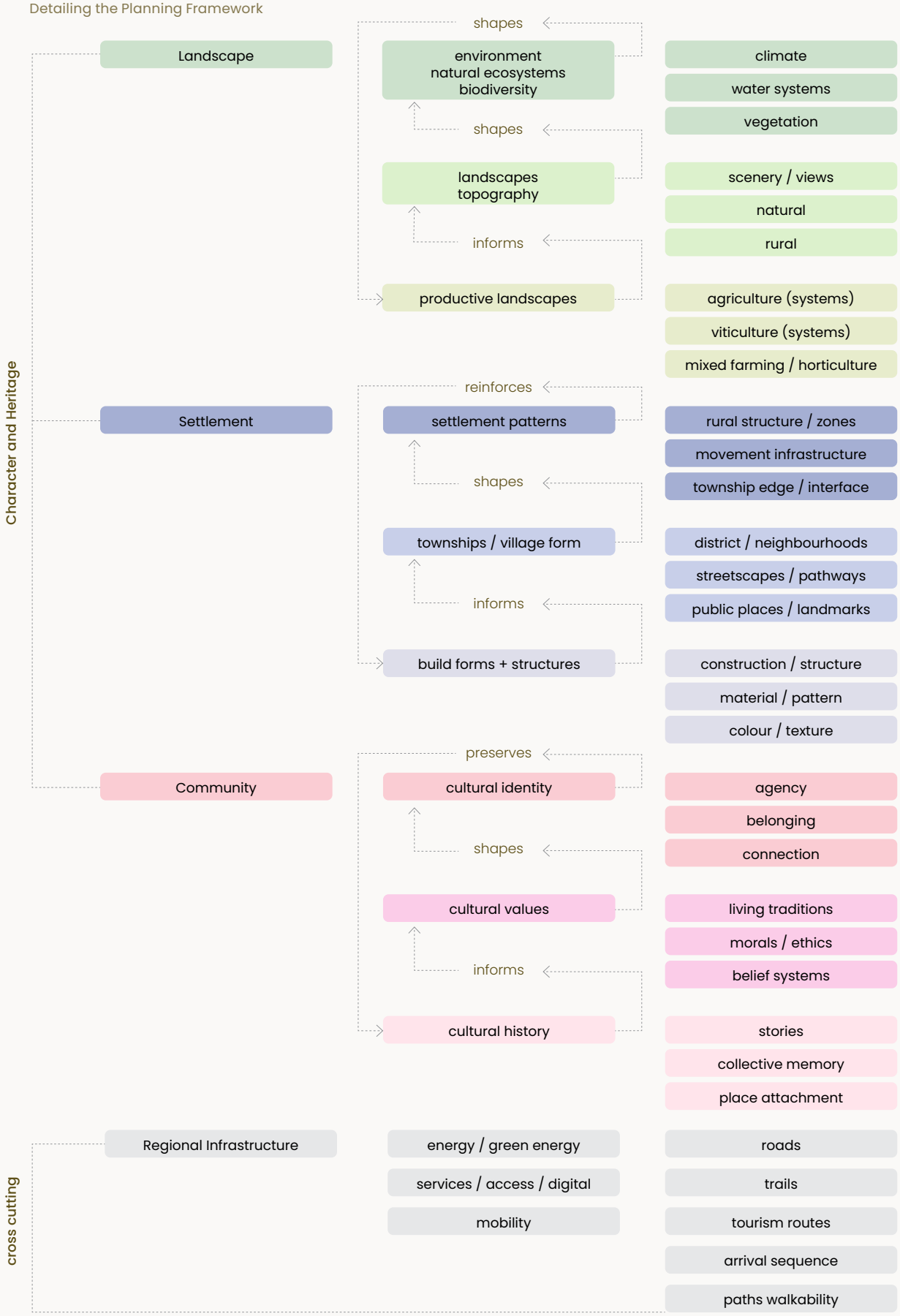



| 2. State Planning Policies |
|---|
| SPP 1: Integrated Planning |
| SPP 2: Design Quality |
| SPP 3: Adaptive Resuse |
| SPP 4: Biodiversity |
| SPP 5: Climate Change |
| SPP 7: Cultural Heritage |
| SPP 8: Primary Industry |
| SPP 9: Employment Lands |
| SPP 11: Strategic Transport Infrastructure |
| SPP 12: Energy |
| SPP 14: Water Security and Quality |
| SPP 21: Special Legislation Scheme Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 |

| 3. Policies Applying to Barossa Under State Planning Policy 21 | |
|---|---|
| 21.1 | Facilitate flexible farming practices to allow producers to respond to changing environmental and market conditions. |
| 21.2 | Development that supports the viticultural, agricultural and associated industries of the district. |
| 21.3 | Well-designed development that is integrated and enhances places, heritage buildings and streetscapes. |
| 21.4 | Rural and natural landscape including areas that contribute to biodiversity are enhanced and protected. |
| 21.5 | Areas with recognised biodiversity and conservation values, including areas of native bushland, remnant vegetation and essential habitat are protected. |
| 21.6 | Investment in new tourism initiatives which enhance the scenic and tourism attributes and values of the district. |

## 6.2 Barossa Planning at Scale

Detailing the Planning Framework




Assembling the complete hierarchy of planning references influencing the Barossa into a single integrated framework, drawn from statutory planning policy, regional strategies, technical studies, landscape assessments and community knowledge. Organised according to its scale, purpose and relationship to regional character, the planning framework becomes becomes a regional knowledge system capable of informing more consistent, transparent and character-led decision making.

## 6.3 Barossa Planning as a System

Stacking the Planning Framework




**Reading Place in Multiple Dimensions**

Most planning information is communicated through documents, maps and policies that are read one page at a time. Occasionally these become two-dimensional diagrams, yet the places they describe exist as living systems shaped simultaneously by landscape, culture, economy, ecology and time. Regional character cannot be fully understood through linear documents alone.

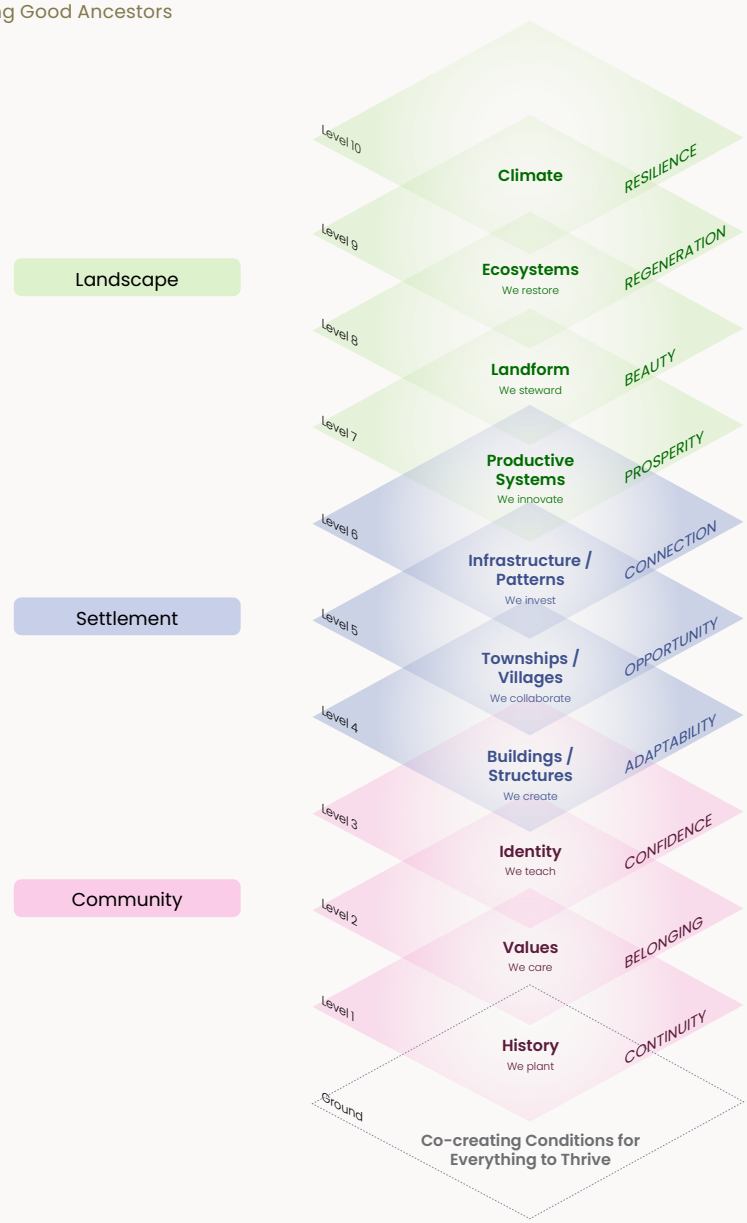
The layered "stacks" introduced throughout this report provide another way of seeing. They translate thousands of pages of policy, evidence and community knowledge into spatial relationships that reveal how different parts of the regional system interact. Rather than simplifying complexity, they make complexity visible.

Each layer contributes a different perspective, but meaning emerges through their interaction. Landscape influences settlement, settlement influences community, and together they shape identity, resilience and prosperity across generations. The stacks therefore become more than diagrams; they are decision-making tools that help connect evidence with design, planning with stewardship, and individual actions with cumulative regional outcomes.

Perhaps most importantly, they encourage a shift in perspective. Instead of asking whether a proposal complies with an individual policy, they invite us to ask how each decision contributes to the long-term story of the Barossa. By making relationships visible, these visual frameworks help transform planning from the management of individual approvals into the stewardship of an evolving regional system. home.

## 6.4 Design for Belonging

Becoming Good Ancestors




**Stewardship that inspires the next generation**

Belonging emerges through the accumulation of relationships that connect people to landscape, community and shared purpose over time. Every decision contributes to that story—from restoring ecosystems and strengthening productive landscapes, to investing in villages, celebrating identity and sustaining the values that define the Barossa. Together these layers create the conditions in which belonging can flourish.

The Regional Character System recognises that these relationships are interconnected. Healthy ecosystems create resilient landscapes. Well-designed settlements foster connection and opportunity. Shared values cultivate confidence, participation and care for place. History provides continuity, while each generation contributes new ideas, knowledge and aspirations. Character therefore evolves not by preserving the past unchanged, but by carrying its enduring qualities forward into new circumstances.

To be good ancestors is to steward more than physical assets. It is to strengthen the ecological, social and cultural systems that future generations will inherit. Restoration leads to abundance. Stewardship reveals beauty. Investment creates connection. Collaboration builds vibrant communities. Creativity enables adaptation. Teaching nurtures confidence. Care fosters belonging. Planting seeds today makes possible the shared futures of tomorrow.

The measure of success is not simply what is protected, but who chooses to belong. When young people see opportunity, purpose and the freedom to contribute, they become more than residents—they become inheritors. In this way, design, planning and development become acts of intergenerational stewardship: honouring those who came before while creating a region that future generations will be proud to inherit, shape and call home.

## 6.5 Design for Contribution

Creating Value through Alignment




**Every place has a purpose. Every purpose creates public value.**

A thriving region is not simply a collection of land uses. It is a network of contributions, where every landscape, settlement and activity performs a role that supports the whole. Homes nurture families. Farms cultivate food and landscapes. Businesses generate enterprise. Schools expand opportunity. Infrastructure enables connection. Recreation strengthens wellbeing. Together these contributions create a regional economy, a resilient community and a distinctive way of life.

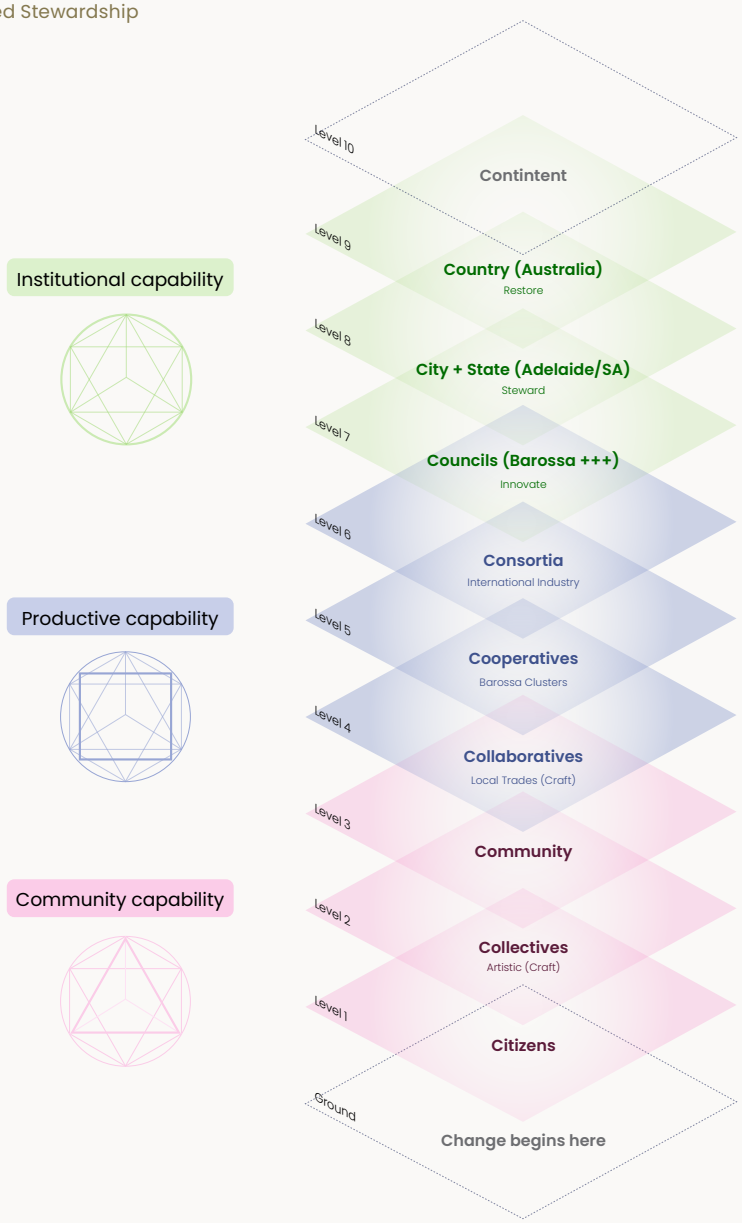
Traditional planning classifies land according to its primary use. While necessary for regulation, this can obscure the broader value that different places create. A character-based approach begins with a different question: What does this place contribute to the life of the region? This shift moves planning beyond managing individual parcels toward strengthening the relationships between them.

The Barossa's agricultural, viticultural and horticultural landscapes contribute not only to production, but also to identity, tourism, biodiversity and international reputation. Residential neighbourhoods contribute belonging. Commercial activities generate exchange and innovation. Institutions cultivate learning and leadership. Infrastructure connects people, goods and ideas across scales.

When these contributions are understood as complementary regional capability grows. Local aspirations align with broader public outcomes, creating shared value for communities and government alike. Planning therefore becomes the design of a living regional system in which every investment, every place and every decision strengthens the capacity of the Barossa to prosper, adapt and contribute to South Australia's future.

## 6.6 Design for Collective Action

Distributed Stewardship




**Governance Architecture**

Regional character emerges through the accumulated decisions of countless people, organisations and institutions acting across different scales and over long periods of time.

A regenerative region therefore requires shared agency. Citizens care for place through everyday actions. Communities organise around shared identity and purpose. Businesses, industries and cooperatives generate economic capability. Councils coordinate local stewardship. Governments establish the frameworks that enable long-term investment and protection. Each level contributes something different, yet they are often operating interdependently.

The Regional Character Strategy recognises governance as a living system rather than a hierarchy. Influence flows in multiple directions. Local knowledge informs regional decisions. Regional vision guides local action. Institutions provide stability while communities provide energy, innovation and care.

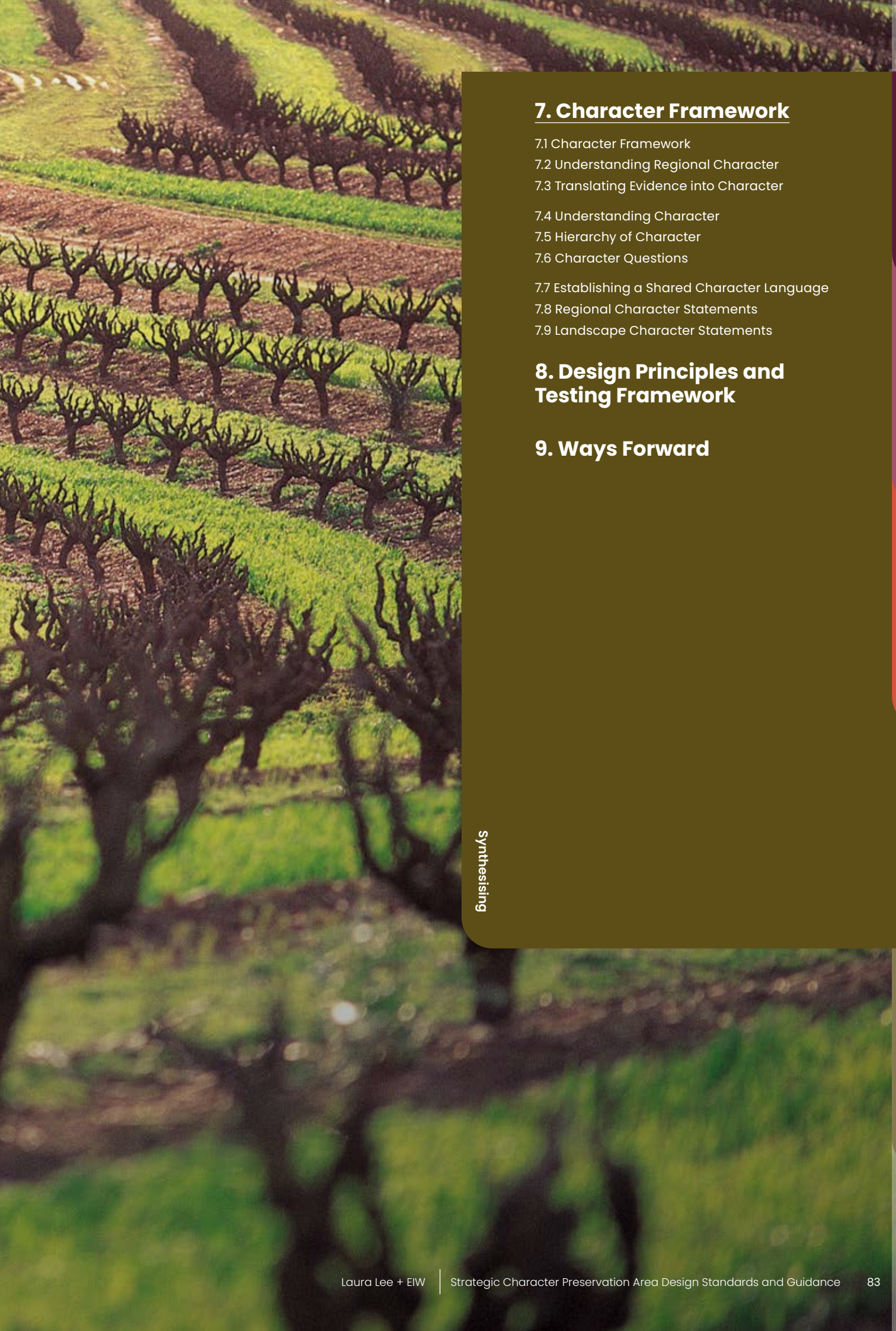
By recognising where capability exists, governance shifts from directing outcomes to enabling them. Planning becomes one participant within a broader regional covenant that aligns people, investment and institutions around shared responsibility. When agency is distributed rather than centralised, the region becomes more adaptive, resilient and capable of responding to change while remaining true to its character.

To change the conversation,
change who is in it.

Margaret Wheatley

# 7. Character Framework





## 7. Character Framework

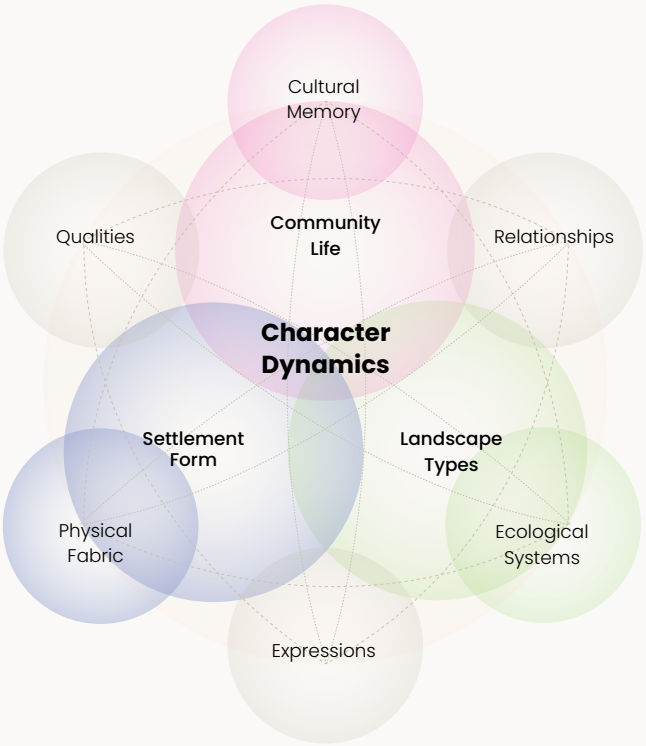

7.1 Character Framework
7.2 Understanding Regional Character
7.3 Translating Evidence into Character

7.4 Understanding Character
7.5 Hierarchy of Character
7.6 Character Questions

7.7 Establishing a Shared Character Language
7.8 Regional Character Statements
7.9 Landscape Character Statements


## 8. Design Principles and Testing Framework

## 9. Ways Forward




## Character as an Emergent System

Character is often mistaken for appearance. It is described through buildings, landscapes, landmarks or heritage places, as though identity can be catalogued as a collection of objects. Yet places are remembered for something far more enduring. They are remembered because of the relationships that exist between people, landscape, history and culture. Character is not a noun. It is an emergent quality of a living system.

Every generation inherits natural systems, built environments and cultural traditions that have been shaped over centuries. Through everyday decisions these inheritances are renewed, adapted or diminished. Communities create meaning through shared values. Landscapes influence settlement, buildings reinforce identity, and stories give places continuity. Together these relationships produce qualities that cannot be designed directly, but which can be strengthened through thoughtful stewardship.

Planning therefore has a different task than simply regulating development. Its purpose is to protect the relationships that allow regional character to continue evolving. This requires understanding not only individual places, but also the ecological, social, cultural and economic systems that connect them across multiple scales.

The Barossa's character is neither fixed nor fragile. It is dynamic, continually recreated through the interaction of people, landscape, enterprise and community. Good planning recognises these interactions, guiding decisions that strengthen the whole rather than optimise isolated parts. In doing so, character becomes more than heritage to preserve —it becomes a living capability that can adapt, regenerate and create value for future generations.

# 7. Character Framework

## 7.1 Character Framework

### The enduring values and qualities of Barossa

The Barossa is recognised as one of Australia's most distinctive regional landscapes. Its identity has been shaped over generations through the enduring relationships between landscape, productive land, ecology and community. Not defined by any single feature, the Barossa's character emerges from the interaction of these elements to create a landscape that is immediately recognisable, highly productive and deeply valued.

The South Australian Planning System recognises the importance of regional character through the Character Preservation District, State Planning Policies and complementary planning policy relating to landscape, biodiversity, heritage, primary production and natural resources. The Planning and Design Code are influenced by the strategic settings provided by the State Planning Policies and Greater Adelaide Regional Plan as higher order planning instruments and any relevant legislation such as the Barossa Character Preservation District Act etc.

Together, these provide the statutory foundation for recognising and managing the qualities that contribute to the Barossa's distinctive regional identity.

Building upon this statutory foundation, the Character Framework provides a regional interpretation of character that brings together planning policy, strategic planning, technical evidence and community knowledge into a consistent methodology for understanding place. It establishes a shared framework for recognising, interpreting and responding to regional character across the Barossa.

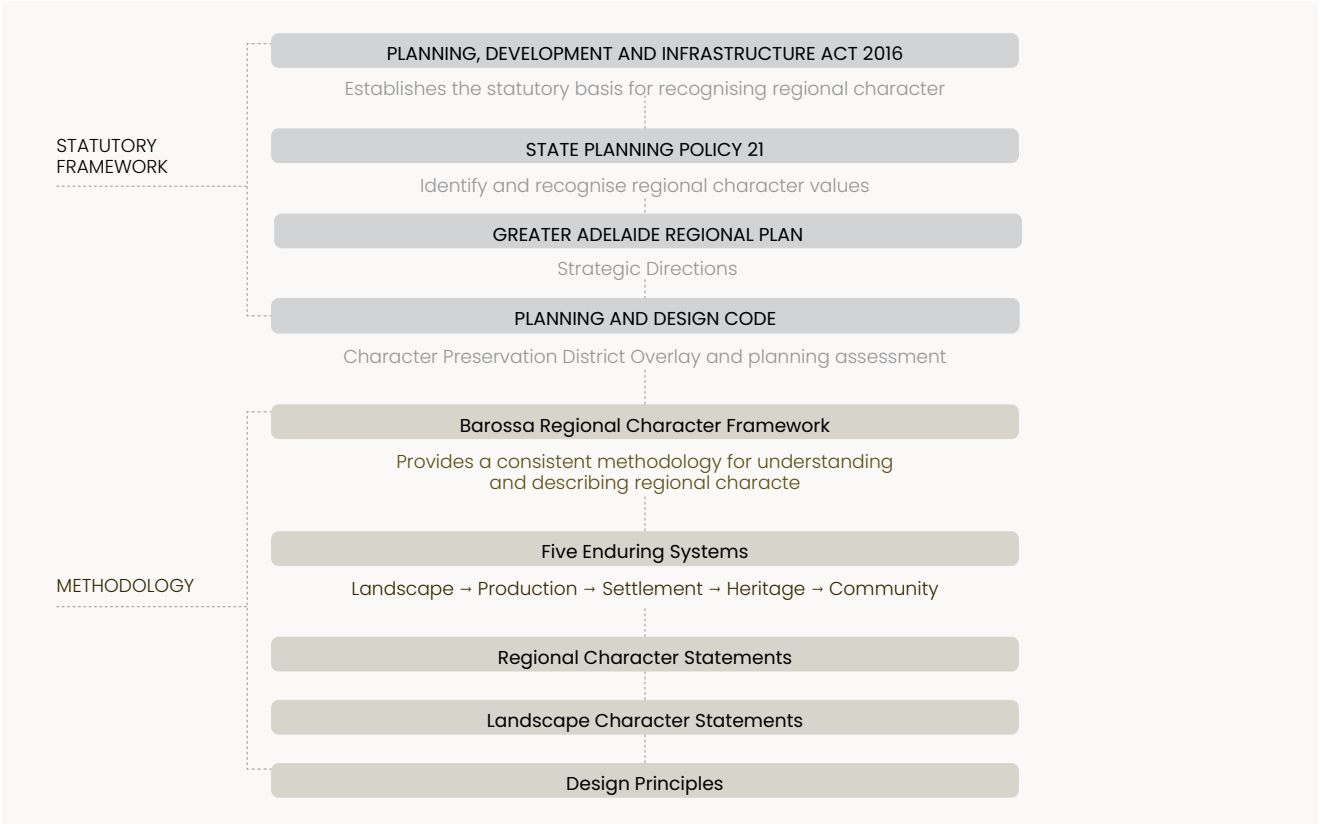
The framework recognises that regional character cannot be understood by considering individual places or attributes in isolation. Instead, character is revealed through the enduring relationships between landscape systems, productive land, settlement, heritage, biodiversity and community life. These relationships create recurring patterns that define the Barossa's identity while allowing individual landscapes, townships and places to express their own distinctive qualities.

Regional character is also recognised as a living expression of place rather than a static condition to be preserved unchanged. Throughout its history, the Barossa has evolved through changing agricultural practices, environmental management, settlement and community life. The framework therefore recognises that future change can strengthen regional character when it reinforces the enduring relationships that make the Barossa recognisable, resilient and valued across generations.

Accordingly, this section establishes a shared Character Framework that is applied consistently throughout the

Regional Character Statements and Landscape Character Statements that follow. Each statement interprets character through the same analytical structure, progressing from observable evidence to an understanding of the enduring relationships and qualities that define the Barossa.

By applying a consistent methodology across every landscape setting, the framework provides a transparent and repeatable basis for recognising, interpreting and responding to regional character. It supports planning, design and decision-making while ensuring that future change reinforces the enduring relationships that make the Barossa immediately recognisable as a living regional landscape.



## 7.2 Understanding Regional Character

Regional character extends beyond the protection of individual buildings, landscapes or heritage places. It is created through the enduring relationships between landscape, productive land, settlement, heritage and community that together shape how a region is recognised, valued and experienced over time.

Within the Barossa, these relationships have evolved through generations of agricultural practice, environmental stewardship, settlement, movement and cultural tradition. Vineyards, farmland, native vegetation, townships, transport routes, watercourses and cultural landscapes are not isolated features; together they form an interconnected regional landscape whose identity lies as much in the relationships between these systems as in the individual elements themselves.

Importantly, regional character is not a static condition that seeks to prevent change. The Barossa has continually evolved through changing agricultural practices, environmental management, settlement and community life. What has endured is not a single landscape or architectural style, but the enduring relationships that connect landscape, productive land, settlement, heritage and community into a coherent and recognisable regional identity.

Understanding regional character therefore requires consideration of both the individual characteristics of place and the systems that connect them. Throughout this section, regional character is interpreted through a consistent set of four analytical lenses:

- **Physical Characteristics** identify the observable evidence that contributes to regional character.
- **Relationships** explain how those elements interact to create coherent places.
- **Defining Qualities** reveal why those relationships matter and what makes the Barossa distinctive.
- **Lived Experience** describes how regional character is recognised, valued and experienced by people.

Together, these four analytical lenses provide a transparent and repeatable methodology for translating diverse sources of evidence into a shared understanding of regional character. They establish the analytical foundation for the Regional Character Statements and Landscape Character Statements that follow, ensuring future planning, development and design decisions respond consistently to the enduring relationships that define the Barossa.

## 7.3 Translating Evidence into Character

### Translating Evidence into Character

The Character Framework has been developed through a structured process that brings together legislation, planning policy, strategic planning, technical evidence and community knowledge into a consistent understanding of regional character.

Rather than introducing a new planning framework, this report builds upon the statutory planning system by translating multiple sources of evidence into a shared methodology for understanding place. Collectively, these sources describe the enduring relationships, recurring patterns and defining qualities that contribute to the Barossa's distinctive identity.

While each source approaches character from a different perspective, they consistently identify common themes relating to landscape, productive land, settlement, biodiversity, heritage and community. Through the Working Group process these themes have been synthesised into a shared framework that provides a consistent basis for describing, interpreting and applying character throughout this report.

This process ensures that the Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements and Design Principles are grounded in both statutory planning and local knowledge. Together they provide a transparent methodology that supports planning, design and decision-making while remaining responsive to the qualities that make the Barossa distinctive.

The former Character Preservation Addendum to the Planning and Design Code was not transitioned as originally intended although it is referenced in the current SPP. As such, there is the need for a contemporary framework that interprets planning policy through the enduring relationships and defining characteristics of place. The Character Framework builds upon the recurring values, relationships and defining characteristics identified through legislation, planning policy, technical investigations and community engagement.

### Translating Evidence into Character

#### Character Preservation Act

Establishes the legislative purpose of recognising and preserving the Barossa's special character.

↓

#### Planning and Design Code

Provides the contemporary statutory planning framework through which regional character is considered.

↓

#### Evidence Base

Literature review, strategic planning, technical investigations, Working Group engagement and community knowledge identify the recurring characteristics, relationships and aspirations that define the Barossa.

↓

#### Shared Character Concepts

Recurring concepts are synthesised into a common language that provides a consistent basis for interpreting regional character throughout this report.

↓

#### Regional Character Statements

Describe the defining characteristics of the Barossa at the regional scale, identifying the enduring systems and relationships that shape regional identity.

↓

#### Landscape Character Statements

Demonstrate how regional character is expressed through individual landscape settings, settlements and spatial relationships across the Barossa.

↓

#### Design Principles

Translate regional character into practical guidance for future planning, development and decision-making.

The following sections apply this framework through a consistent analytical methodology. Shared character concepts are interpreted through physical characteristics, relationships, defining qualities and lived experience, providing a transparent and repeatable basis for understanding regional character before translating that understanding into the Design Principles that follow.

## 7.4 Understanding Character

Regional character is understood through a progression from observable evidence to shared meaning. Physical Characteristics identify the tangible features of place, Relationships explain how those features interact as interconnected systems, Defining Qualities reveal why those relationships matter, and Lived Experience describes how regional character is recognised, valued and expressed by people.

Together, these four analytical lenses provide a consistent and repeatable methodology for interpreting regional character. They enable diverse sources of evidence—including landscape analysis, planning policy, technical investigations and community knowledge—to be translated into a shared understanding of the qualities that make the Barossa distinctive.

This analytical framework underpins the Regional Character Statements and Landscape Character Statements that follow, ensuring each statement is derived through the same process and interpreted using a common language. It also establishes the foundation for the Design Principles, allowing future planning, development and decision-making to respond consistently to the enduring relationships that define the Barossa.

### 1. Physical Characteristics

*What can be observed?*

Physical Characteristics identify the tangible and observable features that contribute to regional character. These include the natural environment, settlement structure, productive landscapes, built form and public realm that provide the physical setting of place.

Common physical characteristics include:

- Landform, geology and topography
- Vineyards, agricultural land and native vegetation
- Watercourses and ecological systems
- Settlement pattern and township structure
- Street networks and movement corridors
- Historic buildings and cultural landscapes
- Built form, materials and architectural character
- Public spaces, landmarks and views

These characteristics provide the observable evidence upon which character is understood.

### 2. Relationships

*How do these elements work together?*

Character is revealed through the relationships between physical elements rather than individual features considered in isolation. These relationships explain how landscape, settlement, production, ecology and community function together to create coherent and recognisable places.

Examples include:

- Productive landscapes shaped by landform and geology
- Townships connected to surrounding agricultural landscapes
- Ecological systems integrated with productive land
- Historic settlement patterns responding to topography and water
- Movement networks linking communities and regional destinations
- Scenic views framed by ridgelines, valleys and vegetation
- Community life connected to working landscapes and shared cultural traditions

These relationships distinguish the Barossa from other regions and reinforce its identity as a living regional landscape.

## 3. Defining Qualities

*Why do these relationships matter?*

As relationships develop and endure over time, they give rise to the defining qualities that collectively express regional character. These qualities are not individual features but recurring characteristics that explain why the Barossa is distinctive and valued.

Recurring qualities include:

- Identity
- Authenticity
- Stewardship
- Continuity
- Interconnection
- Distinctiveness
- Diversity
- Productivity
- Living Heritage
- Scenic Quality
- Biodiversity
- Resilience
- Adaptability
- Scale
- Sense of Place

Together these concepts provide the shared character language that is applied consistently throughout this report.

## 4. Lived Experience

*How is character experienced?*

Regional character is ultimately understood through people's experience of place. Everyday interaction with landscape, productive land, settlements and community transforms physical evidence into a shared understanding of identity and belonging.

Shared experiences include:

- Arrival through distinctive landscapes
- Seasonal agricultural rhythms
- Working productive landscapes
- Main streets, markets and community events
- Views across vineyards, valleys and ridgelines
- Connections to Country and cultural traditions
- Human scale and walkable settlements
- Sense of belonging and local identity

These experiences reinforce community identity and ensure that character is understood not only through what can be seen, but through how the Barossa is lived, valued and remembered.

### Understanding Character

Character is therefore understood through a progression from evidence to meaning.

**Physical Characteristics** identify what exists.

↓

**Relationships** explain how those elements interact.

↓

**Defining Qualities** evaluate why those relationships matter.

↓

**Lived Experience** describes how regional character is recognised, valued and remembered.

Together these four analytical lenses provide a consistent methodology for interpreting regional character across the Barossa and establish the foundation for the Regional Character Statements and Landscape Character Statements that follow.

## 7.5 Hierarchy of Character

Character is expressed and understood at multiple spatial scales. Some qualities define the identity of the Barossa as a whole, while others are expressed differently across individual landscapes, townships and places. Understanding regional character therefore requires a framework that connects these different scales while maintaining a consistent understanding of what makes the Barossa recognisable.

The Character Framework establishes a hierarchy that moves from broad regional identity to increasingly place-specific expressions of character. Consistent with the Planning and Design Code's recognition of landscape and neighbourhood character, the framework provides a region-specific methodology for understanding how character is expressed across the Barossa. Rather than creating separate or competing layers of policy, each level interprets the same regional character at a different scale. Together they provide a consistent line of sight between regional values, landscape expression, local decision-making and future design outcomes

This hierarchy reflects the understanding that character is not created by individual elements in isolation, but emerges through the enduring relationships between landscape, productive systems, settlement, heritage, ecology and community. Each level builds upon the previous one, ensuring that local responses remain connected to the broader regional identity while recognising the distinct qualities of individual places.

The hierarchy also establishes a practical pathway from understanding character to responding to character. Strategic planning identifies the qualities that define the Barossa; the Character Statements interpret how those qualities are expressed across the region; and the Design Principles translate that understanding into guidance for future planning, development and decision-making.

**Level 1**
Regional Character Statements
*What makes the Barossa recognisably Barossa?*
Regional Character Statements describe the enduring systems, relationships and defining qualities that collectively establish the identity of the Barossa as a living regional landscape. They identify the characteristics shared across the region and provide the common framework upon which all subsequent levels are based.

**Level 2**
Landscape Character Statements
*How is regional character expressed differently across the Barossa?*
Landscape Character Statements recognise that regional character is expressed differently according to landform, geology, productive landscapes, settlement patterns, ecology and cultural history. Rather than creating new character, they describe how the shared regional framework is interpreted within each distinct landscape setting.

**Level 3**
Township Character Statements (future implementation)
*How is character expressed within settlements?*
Township Character Statements provide a finer-grained understanding of individual towns and local places. They interpret regional and landscape character within specific settlement contexts, recognising local identity while maintaining alignment with the broader regional framework.
This level aligns with the Planning and Design Code's recognition of neighbourhood character but falls outside the scope of the current project.

**Level 4**
Design Principles
*How should future change respond?*
Design Principles translate regional character into practical guidance for planning, design and assessment. They provide a consistent basis for ensuring that future development reinforces the enduring relationships, defining qualities and lived experiences that contribute to the Barossa's distinctive regional character.

## 7.6 Character Questions

The Character Framework has been shaped through a series of recurring questions that emerged from the Working Group, technical investigations, literature review and community engagement. Rather than focusing on individual sites or isolated attributes, these questions encouraged consideration of the enduring relationships, defining qualities and lived experiences that collectively shape the Barossa's regional character.

These questions do not provide fixed answers. Instead, they establish a consistent way of thinking about place that can be applied across landscapes, townships and future planning decisions. Together they provide a practical bridge between understanding character and applying that understanding through the Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements and Design Principles.

Rather than asking only what should be protected, the framework also considers what should evolve, what should endure and how future change can strengthen the qualities that define the Barossa. In this way, the Character Questions support a planning approach that recognises character as an evolving expression of place, capable of accommodating change while reinforcing the relationships that make the Barossa distinctive.

Collectively, these questions provide a transparent and repeatable lens through which future planning, development and design decisions can be considered.

*What Should Endure?*
The qualities, relationships and traditions that should remain recognisable, valued and connected across generations.

*What Should Evolve?*
How the Barossa can continue to adapt while remaining grounded in its distinctive regional character.

*What Should Future Generations Inherit?*
The landscapes, cultural traditions, productive systems and community connections that should be strengthened and carried forward.

*What Can Only Come From Here?*
The distinctive combinations of landscape, settlement, production and culture that create a uniquely Barossa identity.

*What Feels At Risk?*
The qualities, relationships and patterns that may be vulnerable to incremental change or the gradual erosion of regional character.

*How Should Change Respond?*
How future planning, investment and development can positively contribute to regional character by reinforcing, rather than diminishing, the enduring relationships that define place.

Together, these questions provide the interpretive lens through which the Regional Character Statements have been developed. Each statement responds to these questions by describing the enduring systems, relationships and qualities that collectively define the Barossa's regional character.

## 7.7 Establishing a Shared Character Language

To ensure regional character is interpreted consistently throughout this report, the Character Framework establishes a shared vocabulary that describes the enduring systems, spatial relationships and character values that define the Barossa. Rather than relying on subjective descriptions, this common language provides a consistent basis for interpreting evidence, developing character statements and informing future planning and decision-making.

| Core Character Concepts | Why it matters |
|---|---|
| **Foundational Systems**<br>The enduring systems that underpin the Barossa's landscape, economy, ecology and culture. | |
| Biodiversity | Healthy ecological systems that support resilient productive landscapes. |
| Community | The people, traditions, participation and shared identity that sustain community life across the region. |
| Landscape | The natural framework of landform, vegetation, water systems and productive landscapes that shapes the region. |
| Living Heritage | Heritage understood as an evolving cultural landscape expressed through traditions, practices and places. |
| Productivity | Productive landscapes that sustain both regional identity and the economy. |
| **Spatial Character**<br>The patterns and relationships that organise the region across space and time. | |
| Continuity | Enduring patterns across landscape, settlement and community over time. |
| Interconnection | Relationships between landscape, production, heritage, ecology and people. |
| Rhythm | The recurring seasonal, spatial and cultural patterns that reinforce the Barossa's identity as a living rural region. |
| Scale | Human, township and landscape scale that shape how places are experienced. |
| Landscape Setting | Views, visual character and landscape setting that contribute to regional identity. |
| Movement | The movement of people, goods and experiences through the landscape, connecting settlements, productive land and destinations. |
| Settlement Pattern | The spatial arrangement and relationship of towns, rural settlements and productive landscapes that create the Barossa's distinctive settlement structure. |
| **Character Values**<br>The qualities people recognise, value and seek to sustain. | |
| Adaptability | The capacity to evolve while remaining grounded in character. |
| Authenticity | Genuine working landscapes, towns and cultural practices. |
| Distinctiveness | The unique qualities that make each landscape and township recognisable. |
| Diversity | The richness and variety of landscapes, settlements, industries, cultures and experiences that together create the Barossa. |
| Identity | Regional distinctiveness, recognition and shared understanding of place. |
| Resilience | The capacity of landscapes, communities and economies to respond and adapt to change. |
| Sense of Place | The emotional and cultural connection people form with place through landscape, settlement and community. |
| Stewardship | Shared responsibility for caring for landscape, heritage, productive systems and community across generations. |

Shared Character Vocabulary Framework

The shared vocabulary provides the common language used to interpret evidence and describe regional character consistently across the Character Framework.

The vocabulary is organised into three complementary groups:

- **Foundational Systems** describe the enduring environmental, productive and community systems that underpin regional character.
- **Spatial Character** describes the recurring patterns, relationships and spatial qualities that organise the landscape and settlements.
- **Character Values** describe the qualities people recognise, value and seek to sustain over time.

The shared vocabulary is not intended as a checklist. Rather, it provides the common language through which Physical Characteristics, Relationships, Defining Qualities and Lived Experience are interpreted. While individual statements emphasise different terms depending on their context, each draws upon the same shared vocabulary to ensure consistency, transparency and repeatability across the Character Framework.

The Regional Character Statements that follow apply this shared character language at the regional scale, while the Landscape Character Statements interpret how these same concepts are expressed within individual landscape settings.

Together they establish the foundation for the Design Principles that translate regional character into practical guidance for future planning and development.

Collectively, the three groups move from describing what exists (Foundational Systems), to how those systems interact (Spatial Character), to why they are valued (Character Values), providing a consistent progression from evidence to meaning.

The Regional Character Statements apply this shared vocabulary at the regional scale, while the Landscape Character Statements interpret how those same concepts are expressed across individual landscape settings. Together, they establish the common language that underpins the Design Principles, ensuring future planning decisions remain grounded in the enduring qualities that define the Barossa.

| Core Character Concepts | Physical Characteristics | Relationships | Defining Qualities | Lived Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adaptability | | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Authenticity | | | ○ | ○ |
| Biodiversity | ○ | ○ | | |
| Community | ○ | ○ | | ○ |
| Continuity | | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Distinctiveness | ○ | | ○ | ○ |
| Diversity | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Identity | | | ○ | ○ |
| Interconnection | | ○ | ○ | |
| Landscape | ○ | ○ | | |
| Living Heritage | ○ | ○ | | ○ |
| Movement | ○ | ○ | | ○ |
| Productivity | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Resilience | | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Rhythm | | ○ | | ○ |
| Scale | ○ | ○ | ○ | |
| Sense of Place | | | ○ | ○ |
| Stewardship | | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Applying the Shared Character Language

The Shared Character Language is interpreted through four analytical lenses throughout the Character Framework. Individual concepts may contribute to more than one lens depending on the landscape context. This provides a consistent methodology while allowing Regional Character Statements, Landscape Character Statements and Design Principles to respond appropriately to place.

## 7.8 Regional Character Statements

The Regional Character Statements establish the enduring characteristics that collectively define the identity of the Barossa as a living regional landscape. Together, they describe the recurring systems, relationships and defining qualities that underpin regional character and provide a shared understanding of what makes the Barossa distinctive.

The statements are informed by The Act, the Planning and Design Code, SPP 21, GARP, the former Character Preservation Addendum, literature review, technical investigations, Working Group engagement and community knowledge. Rather than creating new planning policy, they provide a regional interpretation of character that translates these diverse sources of evidence into a consistent framework for understanding place.

Importantly, the Regional Character Statements are not intended to regulate development or duplicate the statutory planning framework. Instead, they establish the broader regional characteristics that future planning, design and decision-making should recognise, reinforce and respond to. They provide a common interpretive framework that supports the consistent application of existing planning policy while recognising that development assessment continues to occur through the Planning and Design Code.

Each statement explores a distinct aspect of regional character but should not be read in isolation. Collectively, they describe the interconnected relationships between landscape, productive land, settlement, heritage, ecology and community that have shaped the Barossa over generations and continue to influence its future.

Rather than representing separate themes, the five statements build progressively to explain the Barossa's regional identity.

- **Statement 01 – What defines the Barossa?**
  Establishes the region's productive landscapes as the defining expression of regional character.
- **Statement 02 – What shapes the Barossa?**
  Describes the enduring landscape systems that provide the environmental structure supporting regional identity.
- **Statement 03 – How is the Barossa organised?**
  Explains how the network of distinctive townships and settlements is integrated within the broader productive landscape.
- **Statement 04 – What gives the Barossa meaning?**
  Describes living heritage as the ongoing expression of landscape, culture, stewardship and community across generations.
- **Statement 05 – What sustains the Barossa?**
  Recognises the enduring relationships between landscape, production, settlement, heritage and community that support the Barossa's long-term resilience.

The Regional Character Statements provide the foundation for the Landscape Character Statements that follow. While the Regional Character Statements identify the characteristics shared across the Barossa, the Landscape Character Statements interpret how those same characteristics are expressed differently within individual landscape settings. Together they provide a consistent framework for understanding regional character across multiple scales while maintaining a clear connection to the Barossa's shared identity.

Every Regional Character Statement follows the same analytical structure:

- **Physical Characteristics** identify the observable evidence.
- **Relationships** explain how those elements interact.
- **Defining Qualities** evaluate why those relationships matter.
- **Lived Experience** describes how character is recognised, valued and experienced.

Together, these four analytical lenses translate observable evidence into a shared understanding of regional character that can be consistently applied across the Barossa. The Regional Character Statements do not introduce new planning policy or predetermined development outcomes. Rather, they provide a transparent interpretive framework that supports the consistent application of existing planning policy by describing the enduring relationships, defining qualities and lived experiences that distinguish the Barossa.

| Regional Character Statement | Character Focus |
|---|---|
| 01. Productive Landscapes as the Defining Character | Relationship between landscape, productive land, stewardship and regional identity. |
| 02. Landscape → Production → Settlement → Heritage → Community | The interconnected systems that collectively define the Barossa's regional character. |
| 03. Distinct Townships and Settlement Patterns | Settlement structure, landscape setting, community identity and local distinctiveness. |
| 04. Heritage as a Living Continuum | Continuity, adaptation, authenticity and living cultural landscapes. |
| 05. Community Stewardship and Generational Connection | Community identity, belonging, stewardship and intergenerational responsibility. |

***Note:*** *The Character Statements presented in this report will need to strictly adhere to the Planning and Design Code drafting principles in The Guide to the Planning and Design Code. This is a key task for the next stage of the project. This will involve converting the Character Statements into a format suitable for the Planning and Design Code and taking into consideration the other policy layers that already apply to the Barossa Valley.*

## 01. What defines the Barossa?

Productive Landscapes as the defining character

### Regional Character Statement 01

Living Productive Landscapes

The Barossa is defined by its living productive landscapes, where the enduring **relationship between landscape, productive land, settlement and community** has shaped one of Australia's most distinctive regional identities. Agriculture and viticulture are more than economic activities; they are the continuing expression of landscape, culture and stewardship that have evolved together over generations.

The Barossa's productive landscapes are characterised by the continuity of vineyards, farmland, biodiversity, water systems, townships and rural infrastructure across valleys, ridgelines and plains. Together these elements form an interconnected working landscape where environmental systems, productive land uses and settlement patterns reinforce one another rather than existing as separate parts. This continuity has enabled the region to remain both productive and immediately recognisable while adapting to changing environmental, economic and social conditions.

The significance of these productive landscapes lies not simply in what they produce, but in the identity they create. The relationships between viticulture, settlement patterns, natural systems and community life have shaped a regional character recognised nationally and internationally. Productive landscapes support biodiversity, sustain local communities, preserve cultural traditions and provide the setting through which the Barossa's living heritage continues to evolve.

**Future change** should strengthen these enduring relationships rather than fragment them. Development should respond to the scale, rhythm and authenticity of the working landscape, support the ongoing viability of agriculture and viticulture, and reinforce the connections between productive land, settlement, landscape and community. In doing so, change can contribute positively to the Barossa's identity while ensuring its defining qualities remain recognisable for future generations.

### Character Components

#### Physical Characteristics

- Landscape
- Productivity
- Biodiversity

#### Relationships

- Interconnection
- Stewardship

#### Defining Qualities

- Identity
- Authenticity
- Distinctiveness

#### Lived Experience

- Sense of Place
- Rhythm

## 02. What shapes the Barossa?

Enduring landscape systems that give structure to the Barossa.

### Regional Character Statement 02

The Living Landscape Framework

The Barossa is shaped by its enduring landscape framework, where **landform, water systems, native vegetation and productive landscapes** provide the physical structure that has guided settlement, agriculture and community life over generations. Valleys, ridgelines, watercourses and biodiversity are not simply environmental features; together they establish the framework through which the Barossa's identity has evolved and continues to be expressed.

The Barossa's landscape framework is characterised by the continuity of valleys, ridgelines, waterways, native vegetation and productive land across the region. Together these elements form an interconnected landscape where natural systems, productive land uses and settlement patterns reinforce one another rather than existing independently. This continuity has enabled the region to remain environmentally resilient, visually coherent and immediately recognisable while adapting to changing environmental, economic and social conditions.

The significance of this landscape framework lies not simply in its scenic qualities, but in the relationships it creates. The interaction between topography, biodiversity, productive landscapes, water systems and settlement establishes a distinctive regional structure that supports ecological health, frames important views, reinforces township identity and creates a strong sense of place. These enduring relationships underpin the Barossa's productive landscapes, living heritage and community life.

**Future change** should reinforce this landscape framework by responding sensitively to landform, natural systems and landscape setting. Development should protect the continuity of landscape systems, strengthen biodiversity and ecological connections, and respect the scale and character of the region's valleys, ridgelines and waterways. In doing so, change can contribute positively to the Barossa's resilience while ensuring that the landscape framework continues to shape its identity for future generations.

### Character Components

#### Physical Characteristics

- Landscape
- Biodiversity

#### Relationships

- Continuity
- Interconnection

#### Defining Qualities

- Scenic Quality
- Distinctiveness
- Scale

#### Lived Experience

- Sense of Place
- Resilience

## 03. How is the Barossa organised?

Network of distinctive townships set within productive landscapes.

### Regional Character Statement 03

Distinct Townships and Settlement Patterns

The Barossa is organised through **a network of distinctive townships, each shaped by its landscape setting** while contributing to a shared regional identity. Rather than forming a continuous urban area, the region comprises individual settlements with their own history, scale and character, connected by productive landscapes that define both their identity and their relationship to one another.

The Barossa's settlement pattern is characterised by the clear distinction between townships and the surrounding productive landscape. Vineyards, farmland, native vegetation and open space provide separation between settlements, preserving their individual identity while reinforcing the continuity of the wider regional landscape. Together these relationships create a settlement structure that is coherent, legible and immediately recognisable as the Barossa.

The significance of this settlement structure lies not simply in the individual qualities of each township, but in the way they collectively express the region's identity. Main streets, public spaces, gateways, landscape edges and the transition between town and countryside establish a human-scaled environment that reflects the Barossa's history while supporting contemporary community life. Each township contributes its own character while remaining connected to the landscape framework and productive systems that underpin the region.

**Future change** should reinforce the distinctive identity of each township while maintaining the enduring relationships between settlement, productive land and landscape. Development should respond to established settlement patterns, respect landscape setting, scale and township character, and preserve the clear distinction between settlements and the surrounding countryside. In doing so, future growth can strengthen local identity while maintaining the diversity, authenticity and distinctiveness that define the Barossa.

### Character Components

#### Physical Characteristics

- Landscape
- Settlement Pattern
- Scale

#### Relationships

- Continuity
- Interconnection

#### Defining Qualities

- Distinctiveness
- Identity
- Diversity

#### Lived Experience

- Sense of Place
- Community

## 04. What gives the Barossa meaning over time?

Living heritage, where each generation contributes to an evolving regional story.

### Regional Character Statement 04

#### Heritage as a Living Continuum

The Barossa derives meaning through its living heritage, where the enduring relationships between **landscape, productive land, settlement and community** have been shaped by successive generations of stewardship, cultural exchange and adaptation. Heritage is therefore understood not as a collection of historic places, but as an evolving cultural landscape that connects past, present and future while remaining grounded in place.

The Barossa's living heritage is expressed through the continuity of cultural landscapes, settlement patterns, productive land uses, buildings, traditions and community practices that have evolved together over time. These interconnected elements reveal how each generation has responded to changing environmental, economic and social conditions while retaining the defining qualities that make the Barossa immediately recognisable.

The significance of this living heritage lies not only in the survival of historic places, but in the relationships they represent. Cultural landscapes, agricultural traditions, community memory and local knowledge continue to shape regional identity, reinforcing authenticity, continuity and a strong sense of place. Heritage therefore reflects both what has endured and how the Barossa continues to evolve while remaining connected to its origins.

**Future change** should contribute positively to this continuing story by reinforcing the relationships between landscape, productive land, settlement and community that underpin the Barossa's living heritage. Development should respect cultural landscapes, retain the legibility of historic patterns and support the ongoing evolution of place so that future generations inherit a region that remains authentic, recognisable and deeply connected to its history.

### Character Components

#### Physical Characteristics

- Living Heritage
- Landscape
- Settlement Pattern

#### Relationships

- Continuity
- Stewardship

#### Defining Qualities

- Authenticity
- Identity
- Adaptability

#### Lived Experience

- Sense of Place
- Community

## 05. What sustains the Barossa into the future?

Enduring relationships between landscape, production, settlement, heritage and community.

### Regional Character Statement 05

Community Stewardship and Generational Connection

The Barossa is sustained through the enduring relationships between **landscape, productive land, settlement, heritage and community**, strengthened by generations of stewardship and shared responsibility. Regional character is not maintained by preserving individual elements in isolation, but by nurturing the interconnected systems that allow the Barossa to continue evolving while remaining recognisably itself.

These relationships are expressed through everyday life across the region. Productive landscapes support communities; communities sustain traditions; traditions reinforce stewardship; and stewardship strengthens the landscape that future generations will inherit. Together these reciprocal relationships create a resilient regional identity where environmental, cultural, social and economic systems continue to support one another.

The significance of community stewardship lies in its capacity to carry regional character forward. Participation, local knowledge, cultural traditions and shared responsibility ensure that the defining qualities of the Barossa remain living practices rather than static ideals. This generational connection enables the region to adapt to changing circumstances while retaining the authenticity, continuity and sense of place that distinguish it.

**Future change** should strengthen these relationships by supporting active stewardship of landscape, productive land, settlements and cultural heritage. Development should contribute positively to community life, reinforce local identity and enable future generations to inherit a Barossa that remains resilient, authentic and connected to its landscape, history and people.

### Character Components

#### Physical Characteristics

- Community
- Living Heritage
- Productivity

#### Relationships

- Stewardship
- Interconnection

#### Defining Qualities

- Resilience
- Identity
- Adaptability

#### Lived Experience

- Community
- Sense of Place

## 7.9 Landscape Character Statements

While the Regional Character Statements describe the enduring qualities that define the Barossa as a whole, those qualities are expressed differently across individual landscapes. Variations in landform, geology, water systems, ecology, productive land use, settlement patterns and living heritage create distinct landscape settings that each contribute to the Barossa's regional identity.

The Landscape Character Statements interpret how this shared regional character is expressed through five interconnected Landscape Character Regions. Rather than establishing separate identities, they explain how the Barossa's defining characteristics are revealed through different landscape systems while maintaining one coherent regional identity.

The five Landscape Character Regions have been identified through the interaction of:

- Landform
- Geology and soils
- Water systems
- Ecology
- Productive landscapes
- Settlement patterns
- Living heritage

Together these systems create a consistent framework for understanding how regional character varies across the Barossa while remaining connected to a single regional identity.

Each Landscape Character Statement applies the shared analytical framework established in Section 7.7, considering:

- Physical Characteristics
- Interrelationships
- Defining Qualities
- Lived Experience

Together, the Landscape Character Statements provide the essential link between regional understanding and the Design Principles that follow.

| Landscape Character Region | Regional Role | Primary Landscape Systems |
|---|---|---|
| **01 Valley Floor** | The Productive Heart of the Region | Productive landscapes<br>Settlement<br>Water systems |
| **02 Ranges** | The Environmental Framework of the Region | Landform<br>Biodiversity<br>Water catchments |
| **03 Eastern** | The Rural Continuity of the Region | Productive systems<br>Openness<br>Rural settlement |
| **04 Western** | The Landscape Threshold of the Region | Movement<br>Settlement<br>Landscape transition |
| **05 Uplands** | The Source Landscape of the Region | Upper catchments<br>Biodiversity<br>Stewardship |

### Regional Character

(The shared identity of the Barossa)

↓

### Landscape Systems

Distinguished through the interaction of:

- Landform
- Geology & Soils
- Water Systems
- Ecology
- Productive Landscapes
- Settlement Patterns
- Living Heritage

↓

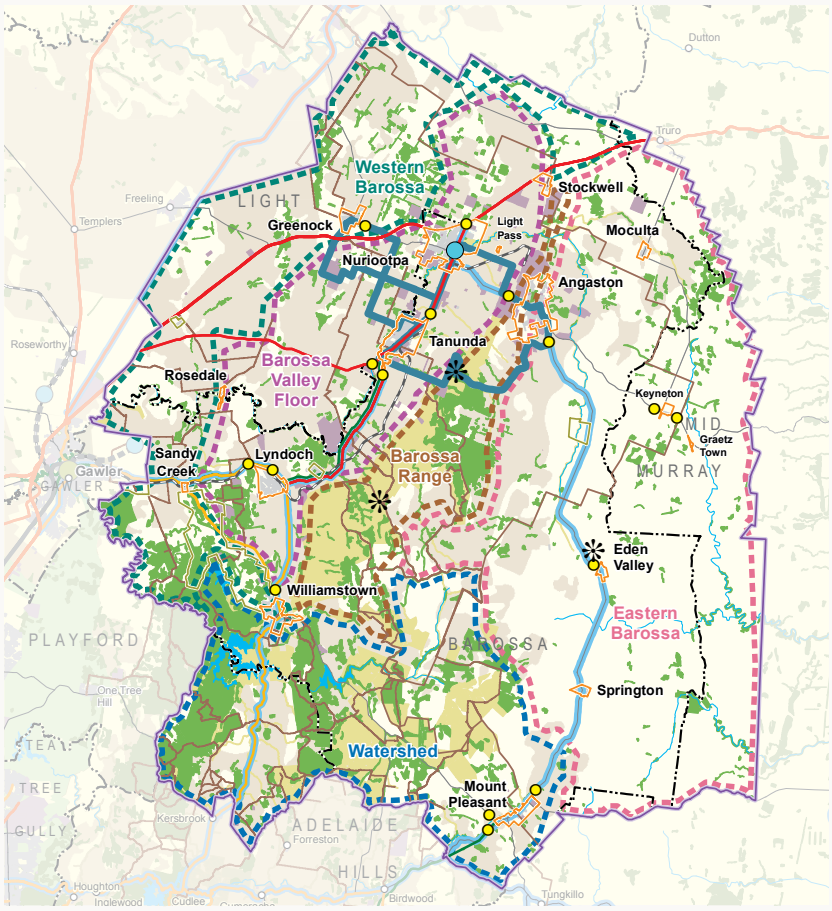
### Five Landscape Character Regions

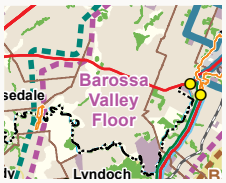
- Valley Floor
- Ranges
- Eastern Barossa
- Western Barossa
- Uplands

↓

### Landscape Character Statements

## Landscape Character Regions of the Barossa




### 01 Valley Floor

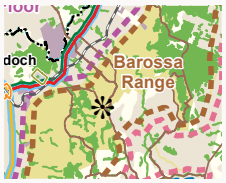
The Productive Heart of the Region

*Looking across vineyards with a township in the middle distance.*

Not just vines.

It should demonstrate:

- production
- settlement
- landscape




### 02 Ranges

The Environmental Framework of the Region

*Ridgeline with native vegetation overlooking the valley.*

Showing:

- elevation
- biodiversity
- environmental framework




### 03 Eastern

The Rural Continuity of the Region

*Broad open cropping country with long horizons.*

Showing:

- openness
- continuity
- rural scale



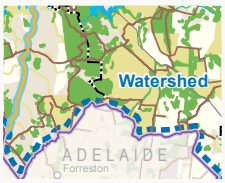

### 04 Western

The Landscape Threshold of the Region

*Arrival view looking into the Barossa from the west.*

Defined by connections between:

- roads
- vineyards
- valley




### 05 Uplands

The Source Landscape of the Region

*Forested catchment or elevated woodland with waterways.*

- Not necessarily dramatic.
- Quiet.
- Natural.
- Showing stewardship.

## 01. How is regional character expressed here?

Where is it most completely expressed?

### Landscape Character Statement 01

**Valley Floor**
The Productive Heart of the Region

The **Barossa Valley Floor** is the most complete expression of the Barossa's regional character. Formed by broad alluvial landforms, interconnected creek systems and fertile valley soils, it provides the physical landscape upon which the region's identity has evolved. The Valley Floor demonstrates how **landscape, productivity, living heritage, community** and **biodiversity** are not separate values, but interconnected systems that together create the Barossa's enduring character.

The Valley Floor is distinguished by its capacity to sustain productive landscapes. Agriculture, viticulture, horticulture and grazing have evolved in response to the natural capability of the land, creating a working landscape where production remains inseparable from environmental systems and stewardship. Watercourses, remnant vegetation, shelterbelts and productive land form a continuous landscape that supports ecological health while reinforcing the region's economic and cultural resilience. The enduring relationship between **landscape, productivity, biodiversity and stewardshi**p defines both the function and identity of the Valley Floor.

Settlement patterns have evolved in harmony with these productive landscapes rather than replacing them. Historic townships remain closely connected to surrounding farmland through their scale, edges and spatial relationships, creating a strong sense of **continuity** across the valley. Roads, waterways and rural infrastructure reinforce the **interconnection** between settlements, productive land and community life, while the openness of the landscape maintains the **scenic quality** that defines the Barossa's distinctive regional setting.

Generations of land management have shaped a living cultural landscape where Aboriginal connection to Country, agricultural traditions, historic settlement patterns and community life continue to evolve together. This **living heritage** is expressed through seasonal cycles, working landscapes and shared traditions that strengthen the Barossa's **identity**, reinforce its **authenticity**, and cultivate a deep **sense of place** for residents and visitors alike.

As the productive heart of the region, the Valley Floor demonstrates that regional character is created through enduring relationships rather than individual elements.

**Future change** should strengthen these relationships by supporting productive landscapes, reinforcing complementary settlement patterns, protecting biodiversity and water systems, and respecting the scale, rhythm and authenticity of the landscape. In doing so, the Valley Floor will continue to express the defining regional character of the Barossa while remaining resilient and adaptable for future generations.

#### Physical Characteristics

- Landscape
- Productivity
- Biodiversity

#### Interrelationships

- Interconnection
- Continuity
- Settlement Pattern
- Movement

#### Defining Qualities

- Identity
- Authenticity
- Stewardship
- Resilience

#### Lived Experience

- Sense of Place
- Rhythm
- Landscape Setting

## 02. How is regional character expressed here?

What natural systems give it structure?

### Landscape Character Statement 02

**Ranges**
The Environmental Framework of the Region

The **Barossa Ranges** provide the elevated landscape framework that shapes the Barossa's environmental identity and long-term resilience. Formed by rugged ridgelines, deeply incised valleys and elevated catchments, the Ranges create a landscape where topography, geology, vegetation and water systems are inseparable. These natural systems establish the physical setting from which the region's biodiversity, productive landscapes and settlement patterns have evolved, making the Ranges fundamental to the Barossa's enduring character.

Unlike the more intensive productive landscapes of the Valley Floor, the Ranges express productivity through a close relationship with landscape capability. Native vegetation, grazing, forestry, carefully adapted agriculture and dispersed viticulture respond to the varied landforms, soils and microclimates created by elevation and aspect. The landscape demonstrates that **productivity, biodiversity** and **landscape** are mutually reinforcing systems, sustained through generations of **stewardship** that respect the environmental capacity of the land.

Settlement within the Ranges has evolved in response to the landscape rather than imposing upon it. Buildings, roads and rural infrastructure follow ridgelines, valleys and natural contours, creating dispersed **settlement patterns** that maintain the visual dominance of the landscape. This relationship between landform and settlement reinforces the **continuity** of the natural environment while preserving the **scenic quality** that contributes so strongly to the Barossa's regional identity.

The Ranges are also a living cultural landscape. Aboriginal connection to Country, historic land management practices, conservation, recreation and rural industries together express a rich **living heritage** that continues to evolve. Elevated outlooks, native vegetation, seasonal change and the experience of moving through enclosed valleys and along prominent ridgelines create a distinctive **sense of place**, reinforcing both the **identity** and **distinctiveness** of the wider Barossa landscape.

As the environmental framework of the region, the Barossa Ranges demonstrate that the health of the Barossa depends upon the enduring relationships between landscape, biodiversity, water, production and community.

**Future change** should strengthen these relationships by responding to topography and landscape capacity, protecting ecological systems and water catchments, maintaining visually recessive development, and supporting land uses that reinforce the resilience, authenticity and long-term stewardship of the region.

#### Physical Characteristics
- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Productivity

#### Interrelationships
- Interconnection
- Continuity
- Scale
- Settlement Pattern

#### Defining Qualities
- Stewardship
- Resilience
- Authenticity
- Distinctiveness

#### Lived Experience
- Scenic Quality
- Sense of Place
- Rhythm

## 03. How is regional character expressed here?

How does productive landscape shape everyday life?

### Landscape Character Statement 03

**Eastern**
The Rural Continuity of the Region

The **Eastern Barossa** expresses the Barossa's regional character through expansive productive landscapes where openness, continuity and rural identity remain the defining qualities. Gently undulating landforms, broad agricultural plains and interconnected rural landscapes create a setting in which production, ecology and settlement continue to operate as an integrated landscape system. It demonstrates how the Barossa's character extends beyond the Valley Floor through enduring relationships between **landscape, productivity, community** and **living heritage**.

The Eastern Barossa is distinguished by its broad rural scale and productive capacity. Agriculture, grazing and viticulture respond to the natural capability of the land, while remnant vegetation, drainage corridors and native habitats contribute to the ecological health of the landscape. Rather than being defined by individual land uses, the character of the Eastern Barossa is created through the **interconnection** of productive systems, natural processes and responsible **stewardship**, reinforcing the region's resilience and long-term sustainability.

Settlement is dispersed across the landscape and remains secondary to the surrounding productive land. Small townships, rural dwellings, local roads and agricultural infrastructure are arranged to support farming while maintaining the openness and **continuity** of the landscape. The relationship between settlement and productive land strengthens the region's distinctive **settlement pattern,** allowing expansive views and broad rural landscapes to remain the dominant experience.

The Eastern Barossa reflects generations of adaptation to landscape and climate. Agricultural traditions, Aboriginal connection to Country, rural communities and evolving land management practices contribute to a living cultural landscape where **authenticity** is expressed through everyday stewardship rather than monumentality. Seasonal cycles of cultivation, harvest and regeneration reinforce the landscape's enduring **rhythm,** while expansive vistas and working farms create a strong **sense of place** grounded in the Barossa's rural identity.

As the rural continuity of the region, the Eastern Barossa demonstrates how regional character is sustained through the enduring relationship between productive landscapes, ecological systems and community life.

**Future change** should reinforce this continuity by maintaining productive land, respecting the broad scale and openness of the landscape, supporting complementary settlement patterns and protecting the environmental and cultural systems that contribute to the Barossa's resilience, identity and distinctiveness.

#### Physical Characteristics

- Landscape
- Productivity
- Biodiversity

#### Interrelationships

- Continuity
- Interconnection
- Settlement Pattern
- Scale

#### Defining Qualities

- Authenticity
- Resilience
- Identity
- Distinctiveness

#### Lived Experience

- Sense of Place
- Rhythm
- Scenic Quality

## 04. How is regional character expressed here?

How does landscape create transition and arrival?

### Landscape Character Statement 04

#### Western

The Landscape Threshold of the Region

The **Western Barossa** expresses the Barossa's regional character through transition. Positioned between the Adelaide Plains and the Barossa Valley, this landscape marks the gradual transformation from metropolitan edge to rural region, where changing landforms, productive landscapes and settlement patterns establish the first expression of the Barossa's distinctive identity. Rather than a simple point of arrival, the Western Barossa is the landscape threshold through which the region is first experienced.

The landscape is characterised by gently rising foothills, productive rural land, creek corridors and evolving vegetation that together frame the transition into the valley beyond. Agriculture, viticulture and grazing occur alongside remnant native vegetation and rural infrastructure, demonstrating the close relationship between **landscape, productivity, biodiversity** and long-term **stewardship**. The changing topography creates increasingly enclosed views that signal the transition from the open metropolitan plains to the more intimate landscapes of the Barossa.

Settlement patterns reinforce this changing landscape character. Historic townships, rural living areas and transport corridors are arranged to respect the broader landscape setting, maintaining clear distinctions between settlements while preserving the continuity of productive land. The **movement** of people, goods and visitors through this landscape strengthens the **interconnection** between communities, reinforces distinctive **settlement patterns**, and shapes the experience of entering the Barossa.

The Western Barossa reflects generations of adaptation where productive landscapes, transport routes and settlements have evolved together while maintaining a strong connection to place. Aboriginal connection to Country, agricultural traditions and historic townships contribute to a rich **living heritage**, while changing views, framed landscapes and the gradual experience of arrival reinforce the region's **identity, authenticity** and enduring **sense of place**.

As the landscape threshold of the region, the Western Barossa demonstrates how regional character is revealed through gradual transition rather than abrupt change.

**Future change** should strengthen this role by maintaining the separation between settlements, protecting productive landscapes and significant view corridors, responding to the scale and topography of the landscape, and ensuring new development reinforces the distinctive experience of arrival into the Barossa.

#### Physical Characteristics

- Landscap
- Biodiversity
- Productivity

#### Interrelationships

- Movement
- Interconnection
- Settlement Pattern
- Scale

#### Defining Qualities

- Identity
- Authenticity
- Stewardship
- Distinctiveness

#### Lived Experience

- Scenic Quality
- Sense of Place
- Rhythm

## 05. How is regional character expressed here?

What landscapes sustain its future?

Landscape Character Statement 05

### Uplands

The Source Landscape of the Region

The **Uplands** express the Barossa's regional character through the elevated landscapes that sustain the region's natural systems. Formed by higher ridgelines, upper catchments, native vegetation and interconnected waterways, the Uplands provide the environmental foundation upon which the wider Barossa depends. They demonstrate that regional character is shaped not only by the landscapes where people live and work, but also by the landscapes that sustain ecological health, water security and long-term resilience.

The Uplands are characterised by their environmental capacity. Native forests, woodlands, waterways and protected catchments operate as interconnected landscape systems that capture, store and filter water while supporting diverse habitats and ecological processes. These natural systems underpin **biodiversity**, reinforce the health of the wider **landscape**, and sustain the productive capacity of the Barossa through generations of responsible **stewardship**.

Human occupation within the Uplands has evolved in response to the landscape's natural capability. Settlement remains dispersed and low in intensity, while conservation, forestry, recreation, grazing and carefully adapted agriculture respond to the constraints and opportunities presented by elevation, landform and water systems. Roads and rural infrastructure follow ridgelines and valleys, maintaining dispersed **settlement patterns** that respect the scale and environmental sensitivity of the landscape while preserving the **continuity** of ecological systems across the region.

The Uplands also express a rich living cultural landscape. Aboriginal connection to Country, traditional custodianship, environmental management and generations of rural land stewardship have shaped a landscape where **living heritage** continues to evolve alongside natural systems. Seasonal changes, flowing waterways, native vegetation and expansive outlooks contribute to the landscape's distinctive **rhythm**, reinforcing a deep s**ense of place** and strengthening the Barossa's regional **identity**.

As the source landscape of the region, the Uplands demonstrate that the Barossa's future depends upon the resilience of the natural systems that sustain it.

Future change should reinforce these enduring relationships by protecting upper catchments, biodiversity and landscape connectivity, responding sensitively to landform and environmental capacity, and supporting land uses that strengthen the authenticity, resilience and long-term stewardship of this defining landscape.

#### Physical Characteristics

- Landscape
- Productivity
- Biodiversity

#### Interrelationships

- Interconnection
- Continuity
- Scale
- Movement

#### Defining Qualities

- Stewardship
- Resilience
- Authenticity
- Diversity

#### Lived Experience

- Sense of Place
- Scenic Quality
- Rhythm

## 7.10 Transition to Design Principles

The Regional Character Statements identify the enduring characteristics that collectively define the Barossa's regional identity. The Landscape Character Statements then interpret how those same characteristics are expressed across the region's distinctive landscape settings. Together, they establish a consistent understanding of place that recognises both the shared identity of the Barossa and the diversity of its individual landscapes.

Importantly, the Character Framework is not intended to preserve the Barossa as a static landscape or to limit its capacity for change. Rather, it recognises that the region has continually evolved through changing agricultural practices, environmental stewardship, settlement patterns and community life. The enduring strength of the Barossa lies not in maintaining every physical feature unchanged, but in reinforcing the relationships, qualities and experiences that continue to define its identity over time.

The Character Framework provides a transparent and consistent interpretive framework that supports the application of the existing Planning and Design Code by translating legislative intent, strategic planning, technical evidence and community knowledge into a shared understanding of regional character.

Regional Character Statements describe what should continue to define the Barossa. Landscape Character Statements explain how those qualities are expressed across different landscape settings. The Design Principles that follow translate that understanding into practical guidance for future planning, development and design. Together, they establish a consistent pathway from statutory planning intent to place-based design outcomes that reinforce, rather than diminish, the Barossa's enduring regional character.

| Regional Character | Character Focus | Design Response |
|---|---|---|
| What defines the Barossa? | Where is regional character most completely expressed? | Reinforce productive landscapes |
| What shapes the Barossa? | What landscape systems shape regional character? | Respond to landscape structure |
| How is the Barossa organised? | How does regional character extend across the landscape? | Strengthen settlement patterns |
| What gives the Barossa meaning? | How is regional character experienced through transition? | Respect living heritage |
| What sustains the Barossa? | What landscapes sustain the future? | Support stewardship |

In the future, only one thing
will matter and it's not money.
It's community.

Liz Mocanu

# 8. Design Principles and Testing Framework



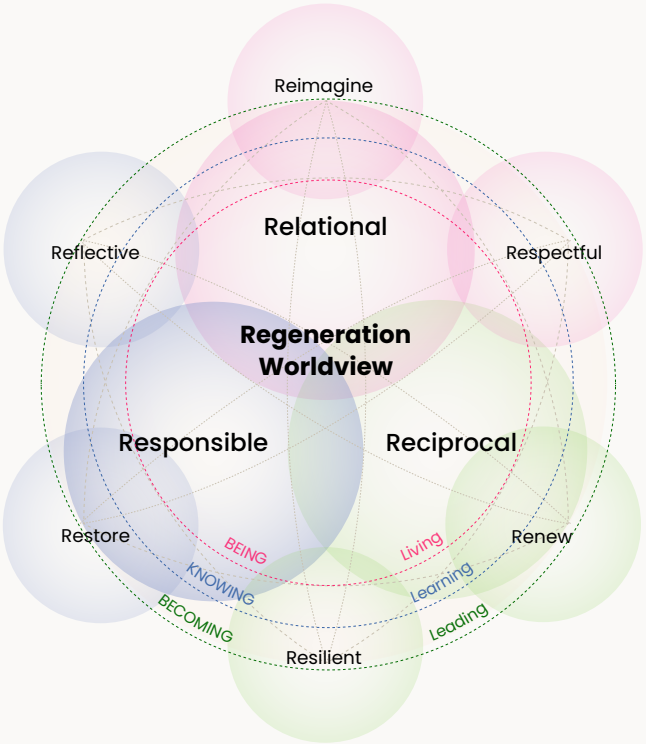



## 7. Character Framework

## 8. Design Principles and Testing Framework

8.1 Applying Character in Planning
8.2 Building on Established Planning Principles
8.3 Developing A Testing Framework
8.4 The Testing Framework
8.5 Applying The Testing Framework
8.6 Testing Frameworks
8.7 Applying the Frameworks in Practice
8.8 Character as an Enduring Capacity
8.9 Design Advisory Guidance

## 9. Ways Forward




## Regenerative Design Ethic

Every landscape carries memory. Every generation inherits both a gift and a responsibility. Regeneration begins when we recognise that we are not owners of place, but participants in an unbroken relationship with Country, community and those yet to come.

For thousands of years, the Traditional Owners of Barossa Country cared for this landscape through continuous observation, reciprocal relationships and long-term stewardship. Country was understood not as separate parts—land, water, ecology or people—but as a living system in which every element shaped every other.

This understanding was regenerative rather than extractive. Knowledge was carried across generations through story, ceremony and practice, enabling Country to remain productive, resilient and culturally rich.

European settlement introduced a different planning tradition, one that excelled in governance, infrastructure and regulation, but often separated environmental, cultural and economic decisions into individual systems.

Today, these traditions need not compete.

Together they offer the opportunity to reconnect stewardship with planning and regeneration with development.

These principles are grounded in the enduring custodianship of the Traditional Owners of Barossa Country, whose understanding of Country demonstrates regeneration as a living relationship rather than a management practice.

These principles describe the qualities of a regenerative culture.

They are not sequential and they are not independent.

Each reinforces the others, creating a living constellation of relationships that guide how people care for Country, shape settlements and steward change across generations.

Rather than prescribing individual actions, they establish the conditions through which enduring character and regional prosperity can emerge together.

Although they emerge from very different cultural traditions, both the enduring custodianship of the Traditional Owners and the multi-generational families of the Barossa share an understanding that place is inherited rather than owned. Both recognise that decisions made today shape the opportunities and responsibilities of generations yet to come. This shared commitment to continuity provides common ground for a regenerative approach to regional stewardship.

# 8. Design Principles and Testing Framework

## From Principles to Practice

### A Character-Based Framework for Regional Decision Making

Every planning decision expresses a set of values.

Whether designing a building, assessing a tourism proposal or planning new infrastructure, decisions are never based on technical considerations alone. They reflect assumptions about what should be protected or preserved, what should change and what kind of future is being created.

For decades, planning has become increasingly effective at managing individual sites and regulating development. Yet many of the challenges facing regions today extend beyond the boundaries of individual properties. Climate adaptation, landscape change, agricultural productivity, biodiversity, cultural identity, housing, infrastructure and economic resilience are interconnected. They require planning that can understand relationships as well as individual development outcomes.

The Barossa Character Strategy begins from this broader perspective.

Rather than treating character as a collection of attractive features to be preserved, the Strategy understands character as the expression of enduring relationships between landscape, settlement, economy, culture and community. These relationships have evolved over generations and continue to shape how the Barossa functions today. Good planning therefore becomes the stewardship of the conditions that allow those relationships to continue evolving while retaining the distinctive identity of place.

This section translates that philosophy into a practical framework for planning and design.

It does so through five connected layers, each building upon the previous one.

#### 1. Worldview

The opening constellation introduces the ethical foundations of the Strategy. Drawing together contemporary regenerative design thinking, the South Australian Principles of Good Design, and Indigenous principles of relationship, reciprocity and responsibility, it establishes a shared way of thinking about place before considering individual planning decisions.

#### 2. Design Values

These broad ideas are then interpreted through a regional lens. They leverage existing SA planning principles, and explain what regenerative design means within the Barossa—where productive landscapes, cultural heritage, community stewardship and environmental systems are inseparable. Together they provide a shared language for planners, designers, government, industry and communities.

#### 3. Regional Interpretation

The regional design values are translated into principles that describe how character is expressed across the Barossa. These principles recognise that distinctive places emerge through relationships providing a consistent basis for interpreting proposals across different contexts while allowing appropriate local variation.

#### 4. Testing Framework

These principles are then organised into a Testing Framework. Rather than prescribing fixed outcomes, the Framework supports policy makers to understand how new or existing provsion within the Planning or Design Code contribute to—or diminish—the relationships that collectively define regional character. It provides a transparent process for balancing planning considerations while remaining consistent with South Australia's planning system.

#### 5. Character as Enduring Capacity

Finally, the Framework looks beyond individual decisions towards their cumulative effect over time. Character is understood not simply as what the Barossa looks like today, but as its enduring capacity to sustain productive landscapes, thriving communities, cultural identity, environmental resilience and shared prosperity across generations. Planning therefore becomes an investment in maintaining and strengthening the Barossa's capacities.

Taken together, these five layers establish a progression from values to judgement, and from judgement to long-term stewardship.

The result is not a new planning code, nor a prescriptive design manual. Instead, it offers a way of thinking that complements existing statutory planning by making explicit the relationships that underpin regional character. It provides a common language for decision-making while allowing the flexibility required for professional judgement and local context.

Ultimately, this section argues that good planning is not measured solely by the quality of individual developments, but by whether each decision strengthens the enduring capacity of the Barossa to remain productive, distinctive, resilient and deeply connected to its landscape, communities and culture.

## Building on Established Design Principles

The Barossa Character Strategy seeks to leverage the South Australian Planning and Design Code and the design values established by the Office for Design and Architecture South Australia (ODASA).

The Code provides a robust framework for achieving good development outcomes across South Australia through principles of inclusion, quality, sustainability, context and long-term performance. These values remain fundamental to the future of the Barossa.

The Regional Character Framework extends these foundations by interpreting them through the distinctive landscape, settlement patterns, cultural heritage and living traditions of the Barossa. In doing so, it shifts the conversation from designing individual developments to stewarding the long-term character of place.

Together they provide a common language for decision-making that connects planning, design, governance and community around the long-term care of place.

| Planning and Design Code Principles of Good Design | ODASA's Principles of Good Design<br>*are embedded in the Planning and Design Code through the inclusion of similar desired outcomes and performance outcomes in both the Code and the Design in Urban Areas General Development Policies.* |
|---|---|
| **Activation and Liveability**<br>support the liveability of suburbs through increased vegetation and more open space | **Inclusive**<br>Good design is inclusive and universal because it creates places for everyone to use and enjoy, by optimising social opportunity and equitable access. |
| **Investment facilitation**<br>facilitate investment in the development industry | **Valuable**<br>Good design adds value by creating desirable places that promote community and local investment, as well as enhancing social and cultural value. |
| **High Quality Design**<br>support high quality design which is accessible to people with differing needs and capabilities | |
| | **Durable**<br>Good design is durable because it creates buildings and places that are fit-for-purpose, adaptable and long-lasting. |
| **Integrated Delivery**<br>promote cooperation and integration between and among state government agencies and local government. | |
| **Urban Renewal**<br>encourage the renewal of existing suburbs to reduce our urban footprint<br>promote the development of public transport of all types and use of walking and cycling trails | **Contextual**<br>Good design is contextual because it responds to the surrounding environment, and contributes to the existing quality and future character of a place. |
| **Sustainability** | **Sustainable**<br>Good design is sustainable because it is environmentally responsible and supports long-term economic productivity, health and wellbeing. |
| | **High-Performing**<br>Good design performs well because it realises the project potential for the benefit of all users and the broader community. |
| **Long Term Focus**<br>be innovative and able to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities | |

## Regional Interpretation of Regenerative Design

Good design in the Barossa is measured not only by the quality of individual buildings or public spaces, but by the strength of the relationships they create over time.

These principles reinterpret the aspirations of the Planning and Design Code through a regional lens. They recognise that enduring character emerges through connections between landscape, community, economy and culture, supported by collaborative governance and informed stewardship.

Together the principles provide a shared language for planning, design and decision-making, helping government, industry and communities work towards a common regional covenant while allowing the Barossa to evolve with confidence and integrity.

Good design is not simply the creation of better places—it is the continual stewardship of relationships that allow place, people and landscape to flourish together over generations.

**Design for Regeneration**

Increase the capacity of living systems to regenerate themselves.
Strengthens Natural capital, Productive landscapes, Heritage assets, Investment, Skills, Innovation, Long-term stewardship
Creates places that become stronger over time.

### Design for Belonging

**Make places that people recognise as their own.**

Influenced by Culture, Participation, Public life, Shared rituals, Local identity, Inclusion, Sense of place
Creates communities that feel ownership of change.

### Design for Systems Value

**Recognise that beauty, belonging, biodiversity and prosperity are all forms of wealth.**

Strengthens Economic value, Ecological value, Cultural value, Social value, Civic value, Knowledge, Beauty
Creates prosperity that extends beyond financial return

### Design for Relationships

**Connect people, culture, ecology, economy and governance.**

Strengthens Landscape systems, Settlement structure, Community networks, Ecology, Economy, Infrastructure, Governance
Creates integrated places where systems reinforce one another.

### Design for Reciprocity

**Ensure every intervention contributes more than it consumes.**

Strengthens Collaboration, Partnership, Shared investment, Mutual benefit, Trust, Stewardship, Governance
Create relationships where people, institutions and landscapes strengthen one another over time.

### Design for Agency

**Cultivate the capability of people, place and nature to flourish together.**

Strengthens by Education, Collaboration, Governance, Leadership, Institutions, Local knowledge, Networks
Creates communities capable of shaping their own future.

### Design for Adaptation

**Support change without eroding identity.**

Strengthens Climate, Technology, Markets, Demographics, Risk, Learning, Innovation
Creates places able to evolve without losing character.

### Design for Continuity

**Honour heritage through renewal.**

Strengthens Memory, Landscape character, Settlement form, Stories, Identity, Intergenerational knowledge
Creates change without losing identity.

### Design for Shared Stewardship

**Establish the conditions from which desirable futures can emerge.**

Strengthens Shared responsibility, Local governance, Caring institutions, Custodianship, Ecological limits, Community participation, Long-term thinking
Creates places cared for across generations.

### Design for Time

**Consider the consequences of actions over the long-term.**

Strengthens Long-term vision, Incremental delivery, Monitoring, Learning, Review, Investment cycles, Succession
Creates decisions with positive multiplier effects.

## 8.1 Applying Character in Planning

### From Understanding Character to Guiding Change

The preceding sections have established the Barossa's distinctive regional character through its legislative context, planning framework, shared character language, and Regional and Landscape Character Statements. Together, they provide a comprehensive understanding of the qualities that define the Barossa and explain why these characteristics continue to warrant careful stewardship.

Understanding character, however, is only the first step. Preserving regional character also requires a consistent way of interpreting that understanding when considering future change. Planning decisions must routinely balance environmental, social, cultural and economic objectives, requiring informed professional judgement rather than simple compliance with prescriptive standards. In this context, character must become more than a description of place—it must provide a practical basis for decision-making.

This section responds to that need by introducing a Testing Framework. Rather than creating a new layer of planning policy or replacing existing statutory assessment processes, the Framework provides an interpretive methodology that supports the consistent consideration of character throughout future policy formation..

Importantly, the Framework does not seek to prevent change. Instead, it recognises that the Barossa is a living cultural landscape and system that will continue to evolve. Its purpose is to help ensure that change responds positively to place by reinforcing the enduring relationships between landscape, settlement, heritage, productive land, community and environment that collectively define the region.

The following sections explain how a Testing Framework builds upon South Australia's existing planning principles, how it has been developed through the evidence presented in this report and how it can be applied to support consistent and place responsive planning policy.

## 8.2 Building on Established Planning Principles

### Existing Principles for Good Design

South Australia's planning system already provides a strong foundation for achieving high-quality design. The Planning Act, the State Planning Policies, The Greater Adelaide Regional Plan, The Planning and Design Code and the Office for Design and Architecture South Australia (ODASA) Principles of Good Design collectively promote development that is contextual, inclusive, sustainable, durable and responsive to its surroundings.

These principles establish an important foundation for assessing the quality of development proposals. They encourage design that responds to local context, supports community wellbeing, facilitates investment and contributes positively to the long-term performance of places.

While these principles provide clear guidance for achieving good design, they are primarily concerned with the quality and performance of individual developments. They do not seek to define the distinctive characteristics that make one region different from another, nor do they provide a consistent methodology for interpreting regional character when balancing change within a living cultural landscape.

### Extending Established Planning Principles

The Testing Framework presented in this report does not replace or duplicate these established planning principles. Rather, it builds upon them by interpreting good design through the distinctive qualities of the Barossa.

Instead of focusing solely on the performance of individual buildings or development sites, the Framework considers the broader relationships that collectively define regional character. It recognises that the Barossa's identity emerges through the interaction of landscape, settlement, productive land, heritage, community and environmental systems, and that these relationships should remain central to the development of planning policy.

In doing so, the Framework provides an interpretive methodology that supports the application of existing planning principles within the unique context of the Barossa. It will complement the statutory planning system by strengthening the understanding of future planning policy and how it may—or detract from—the enduring qualities recognised by The Character Preservation Act.

### A Regional Interpretation of Good Design

The Testing Framework extends the established principles of good design beyond the scale of individual development to consider the long-term stewardship of place.

Rather than prescribing particular design responses, it provides a consistent way of interpreting regional character through informed professional judgement. In doing so, it encourages new planning policy that recognise the interconnected relationships and acknowledging that these relationships collectively sustain the Barossa as a living cultural landscape.

The following section explains how this regional interpretation has been developed through the evidence, policy analysis and stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of this review.

## 8.3 Developing The Testing Framework

### An Evidence-Based Framework

The Testing Framework has not been developed from a single policy, design theory or planning model. It represents the synthesis of the evidence gathered throughout this review, bringing together legislative intent, planning policy, research, working group knowledge and the lived experience of the Barossa into a practical framework for decision-making.

Each preceding section has contributed a different layer of understanding. The literature review identified recurring themes that consistently define regional character across academic research, planning policy and strategic thinking. The legislative and policy review established how character is recognised within South Australia's planning system, while also highlighting opportunities to strengthen its interpretation during planning assessment.

Working group engagement provided an equally important perspective. Workshops, discussions and ongoing collaboration with members of the Working Group - Council, State Government, industry representatives and the community reinforced that character is understood not through individual features alone, but through the relationships between landscape, settlement, productive land, heritage, environment and community.

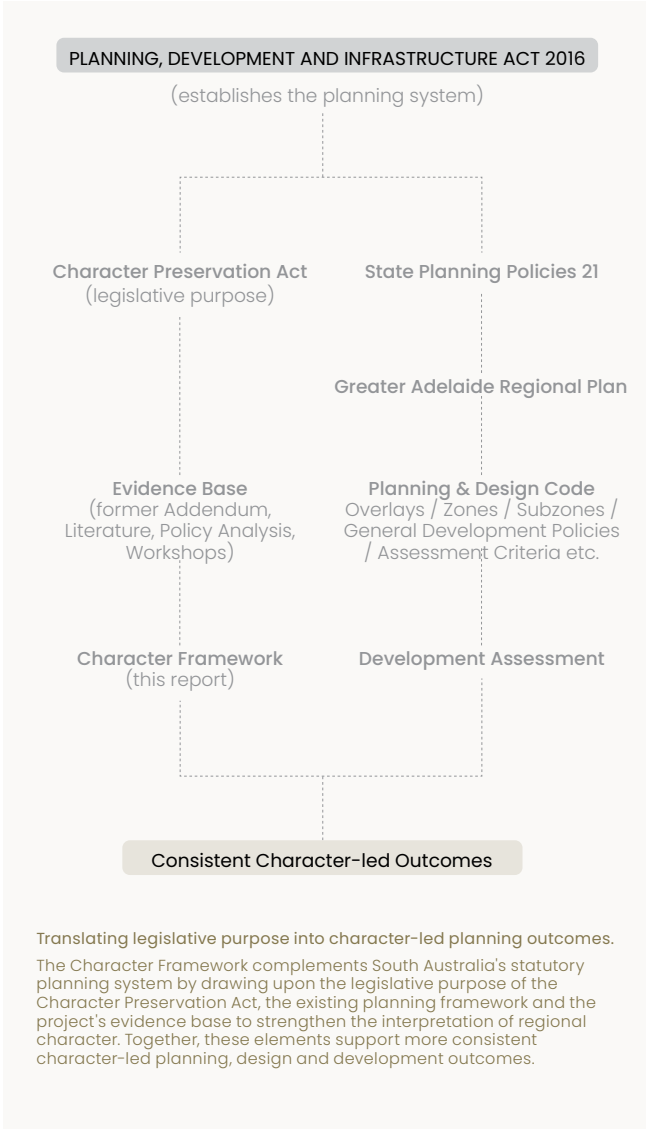
This understanding was then translated into a shared character language and expressed through the Regional and Landscape Character Statements presented in section 7. Together, these established a common vocabulary and consistent description of the qualities that distinguish the Barossa.

### From Evidence to Evaluation

The Testing Framework brings these strands together into a practical methodology. Rather than introducing new policy, it translates the evidence gathered throughout the report into a series of interconnected frameworks that can be consistently applied when considering future change.

Each Framework reflects a recurring theme that emerged repeatedly across the literature review, policy analysis, working group engagement and character assessment process. Collectively they provide a structured way of considering how development responds to place, balances competing planning objectives and contributes to the long-term stewardship of the Barossa.

By grounding each Framework in the evidence presented throughout the report, the approach remains transparent, traceable and repeatable. This strengthens confidence that future planning policy is informed not only by statutory requirements, but also by a comprehensive understanding of the relationships that collectively define regional character.




Translating legislative purpose into character-led planning outcomes.

The Character Framework complements South Australia's statutory planning system by drawing upon the legislative purpose of the Character Preservation Act, the existing planning framework and the project's evidence base to strengthen the interpretation of regional character. Together, these elements support more consistent character-led planning, design and development outcomes.

## 8.4 The Testing Framework

### A Framework for Interpreting Character

The Testing Framework provides a structured methodology for interpreting regional character during planning policy evaluation, considering the relationships that collectively define the Barossa as a living cultural landscape. The Framework has been developed to support consistent interpretation across a broad range of planning contexts.

Importantly, the Framework is interpretive rather than prescriptive. It does not establish mandatory design solutions or measurable compliance standards, nor does it replace the statutory planning framework. Instead, it provides a consistent basis for informing professional judgement by encouraging new planning policy to be considered in relation to the qualities and relationships that collectively define the Barossa's regional character.

### Interconnected Testing Themes

The Testing Themes are expressed through interconnected Testing Frameworks. Each represents a distinct lens through which proposals can be considered, reflecting the recurring themes identified throughout the literature review, planning analysis, Working Group engagement and Character Statements.

While each Framework focuses on a different aspect of regional character, they are intended to be read collectively. Together they provide a holistic methodology for understanding how development contributes to, or detracts from, the long-term stewardship of the Barossa.

## 8.5 Applying The Testing Framework

### A Place-Responsive Polcy Evaluation Process

The Testing Framework is intended to be applied as a structured evaluation methodology that recognises both the shared identity of the Barossa and the distinct characteristics of its individual landscapes. The Framework supports a place-responsive approach that interprets proposals through the relationships that collectively define regional character.

Testing begins by considering the Frameworks which establish the enduring characteristics and qualities that contribute to the Barossa's regional identity.

These regional considerations are then interpreted through the relevant Landscape Character Statement presented in section 7. This second step recognises that while the Barossa's defining characteristics are shared across the region, their expression varies between different landscape settings. Consequently, a response that reinforces character in one landscape may not necessarily be appropriate in another.

Together, the Testing Frameworks and Landscape Character Statements provide a transparent, consistent and place-responsive methodology for informing planning policy formulation.

### Applying the Framework

The Framework should be applied using the following sequence:

1. **Identify the planning policy** and understand its context, scale and purpose.
2. **Consider the six Testing Frameworks** to identify the regional character relationships most relevant to the policy.
3. **Apply the relevant Landscape Character Statement** to understand how those relationships are expressed within the specific landscape setting.
4. **Evaluate the policy** against the considerations and indicators provided within each Framework.
5. **Exercise professional judgement** by balancing these considerations alongside the statutory planning framework and other relevant planning matters.

This approach recognises that character determination is not a compliance exercise. Rather than producing a single prescribed outcome, it supports informed planning policy formulation that responds to the unique circumstances of all planning matters while maintaining the defining qualities of the Barossa.

### Character Reasoning

The Testing Framework does not seek to prescribe planning outcomes or replace professional judgement.

Instead, it provides a shared reasoning process that assists policy makers to translate regional character consistently, making policy judgements transparently, and clearly explain how tensions have been balanced.

In doing so, he Framework strengthens the quality, consistency and accountability of character-based planning policy.

## 8.6 Testing Frameworks

### Reading the Testing Frameworks

The Testing Framework is expressed through six interconnected Frameworks that collectively translate the evidence, planning principles and Character Statements presented throughout this report into a practical methodology for assessing change.

Each Framework examines a distinct aspect of the Barossa's regional character. While each can be considered independently, they are intended to be read collectively, recognising that regional character emerges through inter-relationships.

Rather than prescribing specific design responses, the Frameworks support informed professional judgement by providing a consistent basis for interpreting how planning policy respond to place. Together they encourage robust policy formulation that considers the cumulative contribution of development to the Barossa's long-term character and identity.

To support consistent interpretation, each Testing Framework follows the same structure:

- **Design Principle** – the overarching intent of the Framework.
- **Character Focus** – the aspect of regional character being considered.
- **Framework Statement** – a concise statement describing the desired relationship between change and character.
- **Evaluation Considerations** – guiding questions and prompts that assist interpretation during policy evaluation.
- **Indicators of Success** – characteristics that demonstrate a positive response to place.
- **Application Examples** – illustrative examples showing how the Framework may inform planning policy and how it can shape future development.

Although each Framework explores a different aspect of regional character, they are intended to operate as complementary components of a single evaluation methodology. The six Frameworks should therefore be considered together, alongside the relevant Landscape Character Statement, to provide a comprehensive understanding of how planning policy would evolve to the Barossa's distinctive regional character.

## Testing Framework 01

### Sustaining Living Productive Landscapes

To guide the creation of planning policy that sustains the Barossa's living productive landscape by reinforcing the enduring relationships between agriculture, landscape, settlement and community that collectively define the region's distinctive character.

### Design Principle

Protect and reinforce the Barossa's productive landscape by ensuring future change strengthens the enduring relationships between productive land, settlement, landscape and community, supporting the long-term continuity and resilience of the region as a living working landscape.

### Character Basis

Regional Character Statement

**01 – Productive Landscapes as the Defining Character**

Landscape Character Statements

- Valley Floor
- Eastern Barossa
- Western Barossa

These landscapes most clearly express the Barossa's productive identity, demonstrating how productive land, settlement and landscape operate as an interconnected system that has evolved over generations.

### Character Intent

Future change should strengthen the Barossa's identity as a living productive landscape by reinforcing the enduring relationships between productive land, settlement, landscape and community.

Development should support the ongoing viability of primary production, respect the working nature of the landscape, maintain the continuity of productive land use, and ensure built form remains responsive to its landscape context.

### Why this Matters

The Barossa's distinctive character is created through the enduring relationships between productive land, landscape, settlement and community. It is these relationships—not individual vineyards, buildings or views—that have shaped the region's identity over time.

Supporting the stewardship of productive landscapes strengthens the continuity, resilience and long-term viability of the Barossa as a living working region. Conversely, incremental fragmentation, inappropriate land use or development that dominates the landscape can gradually weaken the relationships that define regional character.

Planning policy should therefore seek to reinforce these relationships, ensuring future change contributes positively to the Barossa's enduring identity.

### Evaluation Considerations

Productive Relationships

- Does the proposal support, enable or complement productive land use?
- Does it maintain or strengthen the ongoing viability and resilience of primary production?
- Does it avoid unnecessary fragmentation of productive landholdings?

Landscape Context

- Does productive land remain the dominant visual and functional characteristic of the landscape?
- Is built form clearly subordinate to the surrounding landscape context?
- Does the proposal respond positively to the existing landscape rather than compete with it?

Settlement Relationships

- Does the proposal reinforce the historic relationship between settlement and productive land?
- Does it avoid introducing urban forms, expectations or infrastructure that diminish the working rural landscape?
- Does it maintain the distinctive separation between settlements and productive landscapes?

Enduring Character

- Will the proposal strengthen the Barossa's productive identity over time?
- If repeated across the region, would this form of development reinforce or gradually erode regional character?
- Does the proposal demonstrate long-term stewardship of the productive landscape?

### Evidence Base

Evaluation should be supported by evidence proportionate to the scale and complexity of the planning matter the policy is seeking to address. This may include:

Site Understanding

- Site and landscape analysis.
- Agricultural land capability assessment.
- Existing productive land use and landscape context.

Character Response

- Character Response Statement.
- Site planning demonstrating the relationship between development, productive land and settlement.
- Design response illustrating how the proposal reinforces regional character.

Assessment of Impact

- Landscape and visual impact assessment.
- Agricultural or operational justification, where appropriate.
- Assessment of cumulative impacts on productive landscape character.

### Indicators of Success

A proposal is likely to reinforce regional character where it demonstrates that:

- Productive land remains the dominant landscape characteristic.
- Primary production is maintained or strengthened.
- The working rural landscape continues to function effectively.
- Built form responds to its landscape context and remains secondary to productive land.
- The continuity of productive land use is maintained.
- Landscape fragmentation is avoided.
- Relationships between landscape, settlement and productive land remain legible.
- The proposal demonstrates stewardship and contributes to the long-term resilience of the Barossa's living productive landscape.

### Application in Practice

This Framework may assist in the preparation and assessment of:

- Agricultural and primary production development.
- Rural industry and value-adding enterprises.
- Tourism development associated with productive land.
- Rural living and land division proposals.
- Township edge planning.
- Character Overlay guidance.
- Rural design guidance.
- Landscape planning and strategic studies.
- Assessment practice notes.

## Testing Framework 02

### Responding to Landscape Structure

To guide the creation of planning policy that responds positively to the Barossa's landform, topography and landscape structure, ensuring development is shaped by the landscape rather than imposing upon it.

### Design Principle

Respect and respond to the Barossa's distinctive landscape structure by ensuring future change is informed by landform, topography, natural systems and landscape context, reinforcing the enduring relationship between development and place.

### Character Basis

Regional Character Statement

**02 – Landscapes and Topography Shape the Barossa**

Landscape Character Statements

- Uplands
- Valley Floor
- Slopes and Foothills
- Riverine Landscapes
- Plains and Edges

Although expressed differently across each landscape, these settings collectively demonstrate how the Barossa's topography, ridgelines, valleys and natural systems shape settlement, productive land and regional identity.

### Character Intent

Future change should respond to the underlying landscape structure rather than dominate or obscure it.

Development should respect landform, topography and natural systems, reinforce the distinctive qualities of individual landscape settings, and maintain the legibility of the relationships between ridgelines, valley floors, watercourses, productive land and settlements.

### Why this Matters

The Barossa's distinctive character is inseparable from its landscape structure. Ridgelines, valleys, slopes, watercourses and plains provide the physical framework that has shaped settlement patterns, productive land use and movement across the region for generations.

Development that responds to this landscape context reinforces the Barossa's identity, while development that ignores or overwhelms it can gradually diminish the legibility, continuity and resilience of the landscape over time.

Planning policy should therefore recognise landscape as the organising structure of the region, ensuring future change works with the land rather than against it.

### Evaluation Considerations

Landscape Context

- Does the proposal respond positively to the site's landform and topography?
- Does it work with existing landscape characteristics rather than requiring extensive modification?
- Does it respect the natural landscape structure?

Natural Relationships

- Does the proposal reinforce the relationship between ridgelines, slopes, valleys and watercourses?
- Does it respond appropriately to vegetation, drainage patterns and natural systems?
- Are important landscape connections maintained?

Visual Character

- Does the proposal sit comfortably within its landscape setting?
- Is built form subordinate to the surrounding landscape?
- Are important views, skylines and landscape features respected?

Enduring Landscape Character

- Will the proposal strengthen the distinctive landscape character of this location?
- If repeated across the landscape, would this form of development reinforce or diminish the Barossa's landscape identity?
- Does the proposal demonstrate long-term stewardship of the landscape?

### Evidence Base

Evaluation should be supported by evidence proportionate to the planning matter the planning matter the policy is seeking to address. This may include:

Site Understanding

- Topographic and landform analysis.
- Landscape character assessment.
- Vegetation and natural systems analysis.

Character Response

- Character Response Statement.
- Site planning demonstrating response to landform.
- Design response illustrating integration with landscape.

Assessment of Impact

- Landscape and visual impact assessment.
- Earthworks and landform assessment.
- Assessment of cumulative impacts on landscape character.

### Indicators of Success

A proposal is likely to reinforce regional character where it demonstrates that:

- Development responds positively to landform and topography.
- Natural landscape structure remains clearly legible.
- Built form is integrated into its landscape context.
- Ridgelines, valleys and watercourses continue to define the landscape.
- Significant earthworks and landscape modification are minimised.
- The proposal strengthens the continuity and resilience of the Barossa's landscape character.
- Development contributes positively to the region's distinctive landscape identity.

### Application in Practice

This Framework may assist in the preparation and assessment of:

- Rural development proposals.
- Hillside and sloping site development.
- Tourism development.
- Infrastructure projects.
- Renewable energy proposals.
- Landscape and visual impact assessments.
- Character Overlay guidance.
- Strategic landscape planning.
- Public realm and open space projects.

## Testing Framework 03

### Reinforcing Settlement Pattern

To guide the creation of planning policy that reinforces the Barossa's distinctive settlement pattern by maintaining the enduring relationships between townships, productive landscapes and the surrounding landscape setting.

### Design Principle

Protect and reinforce the Barossa's distinctive settlement pattern by ensuring future change respects the scale, form, separation and landscape context of settlements, strengthening their relationship with the surrounding productive landscape.

### Character Basis

Regional Character Statement

**03 – Settlement Pattern Defines Place**

Landscape Character Statements

- Valley Floor
- Slopes and Foothills
- Plains and Edges

These landscape settings demonstrate how the Barossa's settlements have evolved in response to topography, productive land and transport corridors, creating a distinctive network of towns that remain clearly identifiable within the landscape.

### Character Intent

Future change should reinforce the Barossa's historic settlement pattern by respecting the distinctive identity, scale and landscape setting of individual townships.

Development should strengthen the relationship between settlements and the surrounding productive landscape, maintain the clear distinction between town and country, and preserve the continuity of the settlement pattern that contributes to the region's character.

### Why this Matters

The Barossa's distinctive character is expressed not only through its productive landscapes, but also through the way settlements are distributed across the region. Each township has evolved in response to its landscape context, productive function and cultural history, creating a network of settlements with their own identity while remaining connected through the broader landscape.

Maintaining the separation, scale and landscape setting of settlements strengthens the legibility of the region, reinforces local identity and supports the continuity of the Barossa's distinctive settlement pattern. Incremental expansion, coalescence or development that weakens these relationships can gradually erode the character of both individual townships and the region as a whole.

Planning policy should therefore reinforce the enduring relationship between settlements, productive land and landscape, ensuring future growth responds positively to the qualities that define each place.

### Evaluation Considerations

Settlement Context

- Does the proposal respond positively to the character, scale and form of the surrounding settlement?
- Does it reinforce the distinctive identity of the township or locality?
- Does it respect the established relationship between settlement and landscape?

Landscape Relationships

- Does the proposal maintain the visual and physical separation between settlements?
- Does productive land continue to define the transition between townships?
- Does development reinforce rather than diminish the surrounding landscape setting?

Built Form and Scale

- Is the scale, siting and form of development appropriate to its settlement context?
- Does the proposal avoid introducing urban forms that are inconsistent with the surrounding character?
- Does built form remain subordinate to the broader landscape setting?

Enduring Settlement Pattern

- Will the proposal strengthen the Barossa's distinctive settlement pattern over time?
- If repeated across the region, would this form of development reinforce or weaken township identity?
- Does the proposal demonstrate stewardship of the relationships between settlement, landscape and productive land?

### Evidence Base

Evaluation should be supported by evidence proportionate to the scale and complexity of the planning matter the policy is seeking to address. This may include:

Site Understanding

- Settlement context analysis.
- Landscape and topographic analysis.
- Existing movement and connectivity assessment.

Character Response

- Character Response Statement.
- Site planning demonstrating the relationship between settlement, landscape and productive land.
- Built form and streetscape analysis.

Assessment of Impact

- Landscape and visual impact assessment.
- Township character assessment.
- Assessment of cumulative impacts on settlement pattern and township separation.

### Indicators of Success

- A proposal is likely to reinforce regional character where it demonstrates that:
- Individual township identity remains clearly legible.
- Settlement boundaries respond positively to the surrounding landscape.
- Productive land continues to provide separation between settlements.
- Development respects the established scale and form of the township.
- Built form is integrated with its landscape context.
- The continuity of the Barossa's distinctive settlement pattern is maintained.
- The proposal strengthens relationships between settlement, landscape and productive land.
- Development contributes positively to the long-term resilience and identity of the Barossa.

### Application in Practice

This Framework may assist in the preparation and assessment of:

- Township growth and expansion.
- Residential infill and greenfield development.
- Township edge planning.
- Structure plans and master plans.
- Land division proposals.
- Character Overlay guidance.
- Public realm and streetscape improvements.
- Strategic growth planning.
- Assessment practice notes.

## Testing Framework 04

### Respecting Heritage and Cultural Continuity

To guide the creation of planning policy that reinforces the Barossa's cultural identity by respecting the continuity of its heritage, traditions, settlement history and evolving relationship between people and place.

### Design Principle

Respect and reinforce the Barossa's cultural continuity by ensuring future change responds to the region's heritage, traditions and enduring relationships between people, landscape and settlement.

### Character Basis

Regional Character Statement

**04 – Heritage and Cultural Continuity**

Landscape Character Statements

- Valley Floor
- Slopes and Foothills
- Riverine Landscapes

These landscape settings contain many of the places where the Barossa's cultural heritage, settlement history and productive traditions are most clearly expressed. Together they demonstrate how generations of land use, community and stewardship have shaped the region's distinctive identity.

### Character Intent

Future change should reinforce the continuity of the Barossa's cultural landscape by respecting the relationships between heritage, productive land, settlement and community.

Development should recognise that heritage extends beyond individual buildings or places to include the evolving patterns of land use, cultural practices, settlement and stewardship that continue to shape the Barossa's identity.

### Why this Matters

The Barossa's distinctive character has evolved over generations through the enduring relationship between people, place and productive landscapes. Its heritage is expressed not only through historic buildings and places, but also through settlement patterns, agricultural traditions, community practices and the continuing stewardship of the landscape.

Respecting this cultural continuity strengthens identity, reinforces a shared sense of place and supports the long-term resilience of the Barossa as a living cultural landscape. Development that disregards these relationships can gradually diminish the qualities that distinguish the region and weaken the continuity that connects past, present and future.

Planning policy should therefore seek to reinforce the Barossa's cultural identity by recognising heritage as an evolving relationship rather than a fixed point in time.

### Evaluation Considerations

Cultural Continuity

- Does the proposal respect and reinforce the cultural identity of the place?
- Does it contribute positively to the ongoing story of the Barossa?
- Does it recognise the continuity of productive and cultural traditions?

Heritage Relationships

- Does the proposal respond appropriately to the surrounding heritage context?
- Does it reinforce the relationship between heritage places, settlement and landscape?
- Does it respect the significance of historic patterns rather than simply individual elements?

Place Identity

- Does the proposal strengthen the distinctive identity of the locality?
- Does it respond to the existing character of the place without relying on imitation?
- Does it reinforce the relationship between community, landscape and settlement?

Enduring Character

- Will the proposal strengthen the Barossa's cultural continuity over time?
- If repeated across the region, would this form of development reinforce or diminish regional identity?
- Does the proposal demonstrate long-term stewardship of the Barossa's cultural landscape?

### Evidence Base

Evaluation should be supported by evidence proportionate to the scale and complexity of the planning matter the policy is seeking to address. This may include:

Site Understanding

- Heritage and cultural context analysis.
- Historical land use and settlement analysis.
- Landscape and place context assessment.

Character Response

- Character Response Statement.
- Heritage impact assessment, where applicable.
- Design response demonstrating how the proposal reinforces cultural continuity.

Assessment of Impact

- Heritage impact assessment (where required).
- Landscape and visual impact assessment.
- Assessment of cumulative impacts on cultural character and place identity.

### Indicators of Success

A proposal is likely to reinforce regional character where it demonstrates that:

- Cultural continuity is respected and strengthened.
- Heritage values are recognised within their broader landscape and settlement context.
- Development contributes positively to local identity.
- Historic relationships between landscape, settlement and productive land remain legible.
- New development responds respectfully without replicating historic forms.
- Community identity and stewardship are reinforced.
- The proposal contributes positively to the continuity and resilience of the Barossa's living cultural landscape.

### Application in Practice

This Framework may assist in the preparation and assessment of:

- Development within historic townships.
- Adaptive reuse of heritage places.
- Development adjoining heritage places or character areas.
- Winery and tourism development.
- Public realm and civic projects.
- Character Overlay guidance.
- Heritage and conservation strategies.
- Interpretation and placemaking initiatives.
- Assessment practice notes.

## Testing Framework 05

### Strengthening Community Identity

To guide the creation of planning policy that strengthens the Barossa's distinctive community identity by reinforcing the relationships between people, place, landscape and settlement that contribute to a strong sense of belonging.

### Design Principle

Support development that strengthens community identity by reinforcing the enduring relationships between people, landscape, settlement and productive land, ensuring the Barossa remains a distinctive and connected place to live, work and gather.

### Character Basis

Regional Character Statement

**05 – Community Identity and Sense of Place**

Landscape Character Statements

- Valley Floor
- Riverine Landscapes
- Plains and Edges

While expressed differently across the region, these landscape settings demonstrate how community identity is shaped through everyday relationships between settlements, productive landscapes, public spaces and shared experiences.

### Character Intent

Future change should strengthen the Barossa as a place where community identity continues to evolve through enduring relationships between people, landscape, settlement and productive land.

Development should contribute positively to the lived experience of place by reinforcing local identity, supporting social connection and respecting the distinctive qualities that make individual communities recognisable within the broader Barossa region.

### Why this Matters

The Barossa's character is experienced not only through its landscapes and heritage, but through the communities that continue to live, work and care for the region. Community identity is shaped by everyday experiences, local traditions, shared places and the enduring relationships between people and their landscape.

Planning decisions influence these relationships over time. Development that responds positively to local context can strengthen identity, foster belonging and support community resilience. Conversely, development that is disconnected from place or erodes local distinctiveness can gradually weaken the qualities that make the Barossa a recognisable and valued place.

Planning policy should therefore support development that contributes positively to the Barossa's evolving identity while reinforcing the relationships that sustain its communities.

### Evaluation Considerations

Community Relationships

- Does the proposal strengthen relationships between people, place and community?
- Does it contribute positively to the everyday experience of the locality?
- Does it reinforce opportunities for social interaction and community connection?

Place Identity

- Does the proposal respond positively to the distinctive identity of the locality?
- Does it strengthen the sense of place created by the surrounding landscape, settlement and community?
- Does it avoid generic development outcomes that could occur anywhere?

Landscape and Settlement Context

- Does the proposal reinforce the relationship between community, settlement and the surrounding landscape?
- Does it respond appropriately to local character and context?
- Does it contribute positively to the continuity of community identity?

Enduring Community Character

- Will the proposal strengthen the Barossa's community identity over time?
- If repeated across the region, would this type of development reinforce or diminish the Barossa's distinctive sense of place?
- Does the proposal demonstrate stewardship of the qualities that contribute to community identity?

### Evidence Base

Assessment should be supported by evidence proportionate to the scale and complexity of the planning matter the policy is seeking to address. This may include:

Site Understanding

- Community and locality context analysis.
- Settlement and public realm analysis.
- Landscape and place character assessment.

Character Response

- Character Response Statement.
- Design response demonstrating how the proposal reinforces local identity and community relationships.
- Site planning illustrating connections to surrounding public spaces, streets and landscape.

Assessment of Impact

- Assessment of impacts on community character and sense of place.
- Public realm and movement assessment, where relevant.
- Assessment of cumulative impacts on local identity.

### Indicators of Success

A proposal is likely to reinforce regional character where it demonstrates that:

- Local identity is recognised and strengthened.
- Development responds positively to its landscape and settlement context.
- Community relationships and opportunities for connection are supported.
- Built form contributes positively to the lived experience of place.
- Distinctive local character is reinforced rather than diluted.
- The continuity of community identity is maintained.
- The proposal demonstrates stewardship of place and contributes to the long-term resilience of the Barossa's communities.

### Application in Practice

This Framework may assist in the preparation and assessment of:

- Township and neighbourhood development.
- Public realm and streetscape projects.
- Community facilities.
- Tourism and visitor infrastructure.
- Main street revitalisation.
- Civic and cultural projects.
- Character Overlay guidance.
- Structure plans and master plans.
- Assessment practice notes.

## Testing Framework 06

### Strengthening Interconnected Systems

To guide the creation of planning policy that recognises the Barossa as an interconnected cultural landscape, ensuring future change strengthens the relationships between landscape, settlement, productive land, heritage, community and environmental systems.

### Design Principle

Recognise and reinforce the interconnected systems that define the Barossa by ensuring planning decisions consider the cumulative relationships between landscape, settlement, productive land, heritage, community and environmental resilience.

### Character Basis

Regional Character Statement
This Framework draws collectively upon **all five Regional Character Statements** and **all five Landscape Character Statements.**

Unlike the preceding Frameworks, which each explore a particular aspect of regional character, this Framework considers how those components operate together as an integrated system.

### Character Intent

Future change should strengthen the Barossa as an interconnected living cultural landscape by recognising that regional character emerges through the cumulative relationships between people, place and productive landscapes rather than individual elements considered in isolation.

Development should contribute positively to the long-term resilience, continuity and stewardship of these relationships, ensuring planning decisions support the enduring identity of the Barossa.

### Why this Matters

The defining character of the Barossa is not created by individual landscapes, settlements, vineyards or heritage places alone. It emerges through the enduring relationships between these elements, forming a distinctive regional system that continues to evolve over time.

Planning decisions often focus on individual sites or proposals. While appropriate at the development scale, this can overlook the cumulative effects of incremental change across the broader landscape.

Considering proposals as part of an interconnected system strengthens stewardship, supports resilience and reinforces the continuity of the Barossa as a living cultural landscape. This broader perspective enables planning policy to respond not only to individual development outcomes, but also to their long-term contribution to regional character.

### Evaluation Considerations

Interconnected Relationships

- Does the proposal recognise the relationships between landscape, settlement, productive land, heritage and community?
- Does it strengthen these relationships rather than treating them as separate considerations?
- Does it contribute positively to the Barossa as a connected regional system?

Cumulative Character

- Could similar proposals, if repeated across the region, strengthen or weaken regional character?
- Does the proposal respond appropriately to the cumulative effects of change?
- Does it reinforce the long-term continuity of regional character?

Stewardship and Resilience

- Does the proposal demonstrate stewardship of the Barossa's defining characteristics?
- Does it strengthen environmental, social, cultural and productive resilience?
- Does it support the long-term sustainability of the region?

Integrated Decision-Making

- Has the proposal been considered through all relevant Frameworks?
- Has the relevant Landscape Character Statement informed the evaluation?
- Does the proposal demonstrate an integrated response to place?

### Evidence Base

Assessment should be supported by evidence proportionate to the scale and complexity of the planning matter the policy is seeking to address. This may include:

Site Understanding

- Integrated site and landscape analysis.
- Character and context assessment.
- Understanding of cumulative landscape relationships.

Character Response

- Character Response Statement.
- Design response demonstrating how the proposal strengthens interconnected relationships.
- Assessment against all relevant Character Assessment Frameworks.

Assessment of Impact

- Cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment.
- Strategic planning context.
- Assessment of long-term impacts on regional character.

### Indicators of Success

A proposal is likely to reinforce regional character where it demonstrates that:

- Planning decisions recognise the Barossa as an interconnected cultural landscape.
- Relationships between landscape, settlement, productive land, heritage and community are strengthened.
- Cumulative impacts have been thoughtfully considered.
- Long-term stewardship is demonstrated.
- Development contributes positively to environmental, cultural, social and productive resilience.
- The continuity of regional character is reinforced.
- The proposal strengthens the Barossa's enduring identity as a living cultural landscape.

### Application in Practice

This Framework may assist in the preparation and assessment of:

- Strategic planning and policy development.
- Structure plans and master plans.
- Character Overlay guidance.
- Regional landscape strategies.
- Major development proposals.
- Infrastructure planning.
- Cumulative impact assessments.
- Assessment practice notes.
- Future reviews of the Character Assessment Framework.

## Regional Character Cases

### Decision Framework to develop Future Planning Scenarios

The following Cases emerged directly from workshops with the Working Group. They identify the recurring patterns of change that, over time, have the greatest influence on regional character. These cases provide a practical decision-making framework that can be explored through future planning scenarios, allowing government, industry and community to evaluate different pathways before they occur. Across the discussions, consistent themes emerged—including precedent, incremental erosion, cumulative effects, fragmentation, visual intrusion and the gradual loss of productive landscapes—highlighting the importance of considering not only the impact of individual decisions, but the collective story they create.

**Incremental Cumulative Change**
Dozens of individually acceptable approvals whose combined effect transforms the region.
Character question
*What is the cumulative story these decisions are telling?*

**1. Large-scale Tourist Accommodation**
Hotels, resorts, cabin parks, eco-lodges and tourism villages whose scale begins to dominate productive landscapes.
Character question
*When does tourism support the landscape, and when does it become the landscape?*

**2. Settlement Expansion / Housing Demand**
Growth at township edges, new residential precincts and urban extensions.
Character question
*Does expansion reinforce village character or dissolve it?*

**3. Tourism Ancillary Development**
Applications where accommodation is claimed to be "ancillary" to agriculture, wineries or primary production.
Character question
*Is agriculture supporting tourism, or has tourism become the primary land use?*

**4. Rural Residential Intensification**
Small allotments gradually acquiring urban-scale dwellings, multiple buildings or quasi-residential estates.
Character question
*At what point does countryside become suburb?*

**5. Productive Land Fragmentation**
Subdivision or incremental approvals that slowly reduce viable agricultural land.
Character question
*Does each approval leave the productive landscape stronger or weaker?*

**6. Landmark and Ridgeline Development**
Buildings, structures or earthworks visible across important landscapes.
Character question
*Does the proposal belong to the landscape, or compete with it?*

**7. Landscape Infrastructure**
Road upgrades, energy infrastructure, water infrastructure, telecommunications and transport corridors.
Character question
*Can essential infrastructure strengthen character rather than simply minimise harm?*

**8. Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Assets**
Reuse of historic buildings, wineries, churches and industrial heritage.
Character question
*How do we enable new life while retaining cultural memory?*

**9. Industrial and Employment Precincts**
Warehousing, manufacturing, logistics, processing and business parks.
Character question
*Can employment grow in forms that reinforce rather than erode regional identity?*

**10. Public Access versus Private Benefit**
Developments that privatise views, landscapes, river frontage, heritage places or experiences once held in common.
Character question
*Who gains, and who loses access to the shared landscape?*

## 8.7 Applying The Framework in Practice

### From Framework to Evaluation

The following examples demonstrate how the Testing Framework can be applied across a range of planning scenarios. They are illustrative only and are not intended to replace statutory planning assessment. Instead, they demonstrate how the Framework provides a transparent and consistent methodology for interpreting regional character while supporting informed professional judgement.

### Example Application of the Testing Framework

#### Large-scale Tourist Accommodation
Case

Purpose

This type of example demonstrates how the Testing Framework may be applied to a major tourism development proposal within a sensitive rural landscape. It illustrates how the Framework complements statutory planning assessment by providing a structured methodology for interpreting regional character and informing professional planning judgement.

The example is illustrative only and is not intended to represent a formal planning assessment or predetermined outcome.

Proposal

A typical proposal comprises a five-star hotel and tourism accommodation development incorporating guest rooms, conference and function facilities, restaurants, wellness and spa facilities, swimming pool, associated parking and supporting infrastructure.

The site is located on a productive rural landscape characterised by vineyards, rolling topography, open agricultural land.

**Step 1 – Statutory Planning Assessment**

A statutory planning assessment considers matters including:

- Land use and zoning.
- Planning and Design Code provisions.
- Building scale and siting.
- Visual impact.
- Traffic and access.
- Bushfire.
- Infrastructure.
- Environmental impacts.
- Economic benefits.

These matters determine whether the proposal satisfies the statutory planning framework.

The Testing Framework then asks an additional question:

*How does this proposal contribute to—or detract from—the defining regional character of the Barossa?*

**Step 2 – Apply the Testing Frameworks**

Because of the scale and complexity of the proposal, **all six Testing Frameworks** are relevant.

**Framework 01**

Sustaining Living Productive Landscapes

Character Focus

Maintaining the productive landscape as the defining characteristic of the Barossa.

Evaluation

The proposal maintains vineyard production, expands winery operations and strengthens tourism associated with primary production. These are positive contributions to the Barossa's productive identity.

However, the scale of the hotel introduces the potential for the visitor accommodation to become the dominant reading of the site rather than the productive landscape itself.

The key evaluation question therefore becomes:

*Does productive land remain the defining landscape characteristic, or does it become the setting for a destination resort?*

Character Response

The proposal is capable of reinforcing regional character if productive land remains visually, functionally and operationally dominant throughout the life of the development.

**Framework 02**

Responding to Landscape Structure

Character Focus

Responding positively to landform, topography and landscape context.

Evaluation

The proposal attempts to respond to the landscape through a horizontal building form, earth-toned materials, retention of vineyard frontage and siting below the ridgeline.

Nevertheless, the overall footprint, built form and associated infrastructure remain substantial within an open rural landscape.

The key evaluation question becomes:

*Does the development sit within the landscape, or does the landscape become subordinate to the development?*

## Example Application of the Testing Framework

### Large-scale Tourist Accommodation (continued)

Character Response

Further refinement of built form, earthworks, landscape treatment and servicing may strengthen the proposal's relationship with the surrounding landscape.

**Framework 03**

Reinforcing Settlement Pattern

Character Focus

Maintaining the distinctive relationship between settlements and productive landscapes.

Evaluation

The proposal occupies a rural location outside an established township.

This raises questions regarding township separation, landscape transition and the cumulative influence of destination-scale tourism within productive rural areas.

The key evaluation question becomes:

*Does the proposal reinforce the Barossa's established settlement pattern, or does it introduce a new urban focus within the rural landscape?*

Character Response

The proposal should clearly demonstrate that township identity and the visual separation between settlements remain legible over time.

**Framework 04**

Respecting Heritage and Cultural Continuity

Character Focus

Supporting the continuity of the Barossa's cultural landscape.

Evaluation

The architectural response references local materials, agricultural traditions, vineyard patterns and regional history.

These responses demonstrate an understanding of local identity; however, cultural continuity is not achieved through material selection alone.

The key evaluation question becomes:

*Does the proposal create an authentic contemporary layer of the Barossa's evolving story, or does it simply apply local references to a generic resort model?*

Character Response

The proposal should demonstrate that design, operation and visitor experience genuinely contribute to the continuity of the Barossa's cultural landscape.

**Framework 05**

Strengthening Community Identity

Character Focus

Supporting the ongoing relationship between people, place and community.

Evaluation

The proposal offers regional employment, tourism opportunities and economic investment.

Equally, it generated significant community discussion regarding landscape change, infrastructure, scale and regional identity.

The key evaluation question becomes:

*Has community identity meaningfully informed the evolution of the proposal, and will the development strengthen the Barossa's sense of place?*

Character Response

Community engagement should be reflected in measurable improvements to design, landscape integration, public access and long-term management.

**Framework 06**

Strengthening Interconnected Systems

Character Focus

Considering the cumulative relationships that define the Barossa.

Evaluation

The proposal cannot be assessed through a single character lens.

Its contribution depends upon the combined relationship between productive landscapes, landscape structure, settlement pattern, cultural continuity and community identity.

The key evaluation question becomes:

*When considered collectively, do the proposal's benefits outweigh its cumulative effects on the Barossa's interconnected character?*

Character Response

Professional planning judgement should consider how the proposal contributes to the Barossa as a living cultural landscape rather than assessing individual matters in isolation.

**Step 3 – Relevant Landscape Character Statement**

The proposal is located within the **Valley Floor Landscape Character Statement.**

This landscape is characterised by broad productive land, vineyard patterns, open views and the visual relationship between settlements and surrounding agricultural land.

Applying the Valley Floor Landscape Character Statement provides important local context for assessing:

- landscape integration;
- built form dominance;
- productive land use;
- visual openness;
- township separation; and
- cumulative landscape change.

This demonstrates how the Testing Framework and Landscape Character Statements operate together as a two-stage evaluation methodology.

Overall Character Evaluation

The Testing Framework does not indicate that the proposal is either inherently appropriate or inappropriate.

Rather, it demonstrates that the proposal occupies a highly sensitive position within the Barossa's character framework, requiring careful consideration of the cumulative relationships that define the region.

The proposal has the potential to reinforce regional character through continued productive land use, investment in viticulture, tourism and economic development. Equally, its scale, siting and landscape presence create the potential to diminish character if the productive landscape, settlement pattern and landscape structure become secondary to the development itself.

Professional planning judgement should therefore focus not simply on whether the proposal complies with statutory planning policy, but whether it demonstrably strengthens the Barossa's defining relationships between productive landscapes, landscape structure, settlement pattern, cultural continuity, community identity and interconnected systems.

## Example Application of the Testing Framework

### Agricultural Machinery Shed

Case Study A - Productive Landscape versus Landscape Structure

Purpose

This example demonstrates how the Testing Framework assists when different aspects of regional character appear to compete. It illustrates how the Framework supports balanced professional judgement rather than a single prescribed outcome.

Proposal

A primary producer proposes a new machinery shed to support an existing vineyard operation.

The preferred location is adjacent to existing farm infrastructure on elevated land. While a lower location on the site may reduce visual prominence, it would require substantial earthworks, longer service connections, increased vehicle movements and reduced operational efficiency.

**Step 1 – Statutory Planning Assessment**

Assessment would consider matters including:

- land use;
- building scale;
- setbacks;
- visual impact;
- access;
- bushfire;
- servicing; and
- environmental impacts.

The proposal is generally capable of satisfying statutory planning requirements.

The Testing Framework then considers:

*Which location best reinforces the defining character of the Barossa?*

**Step 2 – Apply the Testing Frameworks**

**Framework 01**

Sustaining Living Productive Landscapes

Evaluation

The shed directly supports ongoing agricultural production.

Locating the building adjacent to existing operational infrastructure reduces duplication of services, improves operational efficiency and supports the long-term viability of the productive enterprise.

Character Response

Framework 01 strongly supports locating agricultural infrastructure where it strengthens the functioning of the productive landscape.

**Framework 02**

Responding to Landscape Structure

Evaluation

The elevated location increases the building's visibility within the landscape.

This creates potential tension with maintaining the visual dominance of landform and ridgelines.

However, relocating the building downslope would require extensive excavation, retaining structures and greater landscape disturbance.

Character Response

Framework 02 does not simply favour the least visible outcome.

It asks which option responds most appropriately to the landscape as a whole.

If the higher location avoids major landform modification and enables a building that follows existing topography, the overall landscape outcome may be preferable.

**Framework 03**

Reinforcing Settlement Pattern

The proposal does not alter settlement pattern or township relationships.

Minimal relevance.

**Framework 04**

Respecting Heritage and Cultural Continuity

Agricultural sheds are part of the Barossa's evolving productive landscape.

A contemporary agricultural building that supports ongoing farming can reinforce the continuity of working land use.

The evaluation therefore focuses on siting, scale and relationship to the existing farmstead rather than architectural style.

**Framework 05**

Strengthening Community Identity

The proposal supports the continuation of local agricultural activity and reinforces the Barossa's identity as a working landscape.

Minimal adverse community implications.

**Framework 06**

Strengthening Interconnected Systems

When considered collectively, the proposal demonstrates that productive function, landscape response and long-term stewardship are interconnected.

The most visually discreet outcome is not automatically the outcome that best reinforces regional character.

The Framework therefore considers whether the proposal strengthens the broader agricultural system while remaining responsive to landscape context.

**Step 3 – Relevant Landscape Character Statement**

The proposal is located within the **Valley Floor Landscape Character Statement.**

This landscape is characterised by broad productive land, vineyard patterns, open views and the visual relationship between settlements and surrounding agricultural land.

Applying the Valley Floor Landscape Character Statement provides important local context for assessing:

- landscape integration;
- built form dominance;
- productive land use;
- visual openness;
- township separation; and
- cumulative landscape change.

This demonstrates how the Testing Framework and Landscape Character Statements operate together as a two-stage evaluation methodology.

Overall Character Evaluation

The Testing Framework does not indicate that the proposal is either inherently appropriate or inappropriate.

Rather, it demonstrates that the proposal occupies a highly sensitive position within the Barossa's character framework, requiring careful consideration of the cumulative relationships that define the region.

## Example Application of the Testing Framework

**Agricultural Machinery Shed** (continued)
Case Study A - Productive Landscape versus Landscape Structure

The proposal has the potential to reinforce regional character through continued productive land use, investment in viticulture, tourism and economic development. Equally, its scale, siting and landscape presence create the potential to diminish character if the productive landscape, settlement pattern and landscape structure become secondary to the development itself.

Professional planning judgement should therefore focus not simply on whether the proposal complies with statutory planning policy, but whether it demonstrably strengthens the Barossa's defining relationships between productive landscapes, landscape structure, settlement pattern, cultural continuity, community identity and interconnected systems.

## Example Application of the Testing Framework

### Agricultural Building

Case Study B – Commercial Use Disguised as Agricultural Infrastructure

Purpose

This example demonstrates how the Testing Framework can assist where a proposal appears to satisfy a statutory planning pathway but raises broader questions about regional character.

It illustrates that character assessment considers the genuine relationship between land use, built form and place, rather than relying solely on the description of a development.

Proposal

A winery proposes a large Colorbond building described as a **barrel storage facility** associated with an existing vineyard.

The building adopts the appearance of a conventional agricultural shed and is assessed through planning pathways intended for primary production infrastructure.

However, supporting material indicates the building is intended to accommodate future wine tasting, hospitality, events and visitor functions, therefore the authority would assess those matters as part of the statutory process.

**Step 1 – Statutory Planning Assessment**

The proposal may satisfy planning provisions relating to:

- agricultural buildings;
- setbacks;
- height;
- site coverage;
- access; and
- servicing.

The Testing Framework asks an additional question:

*Does the proposal genuinely reinforce the productive landscape, or is the agricultural building acting as a surrogate for a commercial tourism facility?*

**Step 2 – Apply the Testing Frameworks**

**Framework 01**

Sustaining Living Productive Landscapes

Evaluation

Agricultural sheds are an accepted and important component of the Barossa's productive landscape.

However, this Framework asks whether the proposed building primarily supports agricultural production or whether agricultural activity has become secondary to commercial visitor use.

Character Response

Where hospitality becomes the dominant function, the relationship between productive land and built form begins to weaken.

The proposal should demonstrate that agricultural production remains the primary purpose of the building and the site.

**Framework 02**

Responding to Landscape Structure

Evaluation

The utilitarian form may appear visually consistent with agricultural infrastructure.

However, external works associated with hospitality—including expanded parking, lighting, signage, outdoor dining, event spaces and servicing—may significantly alter the landscape setting.

Character Response

Evaluation should consider the cumulative landscape outcome rather than the appearance of the building alone.

**Framework 03**

Reinforcing Settlement Pattern

Evaluation

Hospitality uses typically generate levels of visitation, traffic and activity that differ significantly from agricultural infrastructure.

The key question becomes whether a commercial destination use is appropriate within a productive rural landscape or whether it begins to establish an urban pattern of activity between settlements.

**Framework 04**

Respecting Heritage and Cultural Continuity

Evaluation

The Barossa has a long tradition of wineries evolving alongside agricultural production.

However, cultural continuity is reinforced when tourism grows from productive land rather than replacing it.

Using an agricultural building typology to facilitate an unrelated commercial function risks weakening that relationship.

**Framework 05**

Strengthening Community Identity

Evaluation

Visitors value authentic working wineries because they reflect the Barossa's living productive identity.

Where agricultural buildings become generic event venues with only a nominal relationship to production, this authenticity may be diminished.

Evaluation should therefore consider whether the proposal contributes to the Barossa's distinctive identity or introduces a development outcome that could occur in any wine region.

**Framework 06**

Strengthening Interconnected Systems

Evaluation

When considered collectively, the Framework asks whether the proposal strengthens the interconnected relationships between productive land, landscape, settlement, heritage and community.

If the agricultural function becomes incidental to hospitality, those relationships become increasingly difficult to demonstrate.

The evaluation therefore considers the **substance** of the proposal rather than its description.

**Step 3 – Relevant Landscape Character Statement**

Evaluation should also consider the relevant Landscape Character Statement for the site.

While agricultural buildings are expected components of many Barossa landscapes, commercial visitor facilities may introduce different patterns of activity, infrastructure and landscape change.

This local context assists in determining whether the proposal remains consistent with the defining qualities of the surrounding landscape.

Professional Planning Judgement

The Testing Framework does not conclude that hospitality within productive landscapes is inappropriate.

Nor does it suggest that agricultural buildings cannot evolve to accommodate changing industry practices.

## Example Application of the Testing Framework

### **Agricultural Building** (continued)
### Case Study B – Commercial Use Disguised as Agricultural Infrastructure

Rather, it asks whether the proposal maintains an authentic and proportionate relationship with the productive landscape.

Where a building is presented as agricultural infrastructure but primarily functions as a commercial hospitality venue, the proposal may no longer reinforce the character relationships that justified its assessment as agricultural development.

Professional judgement should therefore consider the proposal's **primary function, operational characteristics** and **long-term contribution to regional characte**r, rather than relying solely on its external appearance or planning classification. Furthermore, If a building is used for agricultural storage and events, and these uses are not trifling in nature, both land uses within the single building would form part of the statutory assessment.

#### Character Evaluation Outcome

This example demonstrates that character evaluation extends beyond the physical appearance of development.

A building may resemble a traditional agricultural shed, yet still weaken regional character if its function, scale or operation fundamentally alters the relationship between productive land, settlement, landscape and community.

The Testing Framework therefore provides an additional layer of evaluation that considers whether the proposal genuinely contributes to the Barossa's living productive landscape or simply adopts its appearance.

## Example Application of the Testing Framework

### Lifestyle Dwelling on a Rural Allotment
Character Assessment Test Case

**Purpose**

This example demonstrates how the Testing Framework can assist when a proposal is individually reasonable but has the potential to contribute to cumulative change across the broader landscape.

It illustrates how the Framework complements statutory planning assessment by considering not only the merits of an individual proposal, but also its contribution to the long-term character of the Barossa.

The example is illustrative only and is not intended to represent a formal planning assessment or predetermined outcome.

**Proposal**

A dwelling is proposed on an existing vacant rural allotment located outside an established township.

The allotment is lawfully created and is capable of accommodating a dwelling under the Planning and Design Code. The dwelling is intended primarily as a lifestyle residence and is not required to support primary production or the management of the land.

The proposal includes associated access, services, landscaping, domestic infrastructure and outbuildings typical of a rural residential property.

**Step 1 – Statutory Planning Assessment**

A statutory planning assessment considers matters including:

- land use and zoning;
- Planning and Design Code provisions;
- siting and setbacks;
- bushfire;
- access;
- infrastructure;
- environmental impacts; and
- servicing.

These matters determine whether the proposal satisfies the statutory planning framework.

The Testing Framework then asks an additional question:

*Will this dwelling strengthen—or gradually alter—the productive, landscape and settlement relationships that define the Barossa?*

**Step 2 – Apply the Character Assessment Frameworks**

**Framework 01**

Sustaining Living Productive Landscapes

**Character Focus**

Maintaining the productive landscape as the defining characteristic of the Barossa.

**Evaluation**

The dwelling occupies productive rural land but is not directly associated with primary production.

While a single dwelling may have little immediate impact, lifestyle housing can gradually reduce agricultural flexibility through land fragmentation, domestic expectations and potential conflict with ongoing farming operations.

**The key evaluation question becomes:**

*Does the proposal support the long-term function of the productive landscape, or does it introduce a predominantly residential use into a working rural environment?*

**Character Response**

The proposal should demonstrate that productive land remains the dominant land use and that the dwelling does not compromise the ongoing viability or stewardship of the surrounding agricultural landscape.

**Framework 02**

Responding to Landscape Structure

**Character Focus**

Responding positively to landform, topography and landscape context.

**Evaluation**

The dwelling may be sensitively sited and designed.

However, associated domestic infrastructure—including driveways, fencing, gardens, lighting, water tanks and ancillary buildings—may collectively alter the open rural landscape.

**The key evaluation question becomes:**

*Does the proposal remain subordinate to the landscape, or does it introduce a suburban pattern into a rural setting?*

**Character Response**

Development should respond to the existing landform and maintain the visual continuity of the productive landscape.

**Framework 03**

Reinforcing Settlement Pattern

**Character Focus**

Maintaining the distinctive relationship between settlements and productive landscapes.

**Evaluation**

The proposal is located outside an established township and does not reinforce the existing settlement pattern.

Individually, this may appear to have limited consequence.

Collectively, repeated lifestyle dwellings have the potential to disperse residential development across productive landscapes, weakening the distinction between settlements and the rural land that separates them.

**The key evaluation question becomes:**

*If repeated across the region, would this pattern of development reinforce or erode the Barossa's distinctive settlement structure?*

**Character Response**

Evaluation should consider both the individual proposal and its contribution to cumulative settlement change.

**Framework 04**

Respecting Heritage and Cultural Continuity

**Character Focus**

Supporting the continuity of the Barossa's cultural landscape.

**Evaluation**

Historically, rural dwellings were closely associated with productive land and the management of agricultural enterprises.

A lifestyle dwelling without an agricultural purpose may gradually alter this relationship.

**The key evaluation question becomes:**

*Does the proposal reinforce the Barossa's tradition as a living productive landscape, or does it introduce a different pattern of rural occupation?*

**Character Response**

Development should demonstrate how it contributes positively to the continuity of the Barossa's cultural landscape and its

## Example Application of the Testing Framework

### **Lifestyle Dwelling on a Rural Allotment** (continued)
Case

enduring productive identity.

**Framework 05**

Strengthening Community Identity

Character Focus

Supporting the ongoing relationship between people, place and community.

Evaluation

Lifestyle residents often value the rural qualities of the Barossa.

However, they may also introduce expectations regarding noise, spraying, machinery movements, harvesting, lighting or agricultural practices that are fundamental to a working rural landscape.

The key evaluation question becomes:

*Will the proposal strengthen the Barossa's identity as a living working region, or gradually create expectations more consistent with rural residential living?*

Character Response

Evaluation should consider whether the proposal supports the continuation of the productive landscape and the communities that depend upon it.

**Framework 06**

Strengthening Interconnected Systems

Character Focus

Recognising the cumulative relationships that define the Barossa.

Evaluation

Viewed in isolation, the proposal may appear appropriate.

When considered collectively with similar proposals across the region, however, incremental lifestyle housing has the potential to alter productive land use, settlement pattern, landscape character and community expectations.

The key evaluation question becomes:

*What are the cumulative implications if this form of development is repeated across the Barossa?*

Character Response

Professional judgement should consider not only the immediate impacts of the proposal but also its contribution to long-term regional character.

**Step 3 – Relevant Landscape Character Statement**

Evaluation should also consider the relevant Landscape Character Statement for the site.

The Landscape Character Statement assists in understanding how productive land, settlement, topography and landscape relationships are expressed in that particular location, ensuring the proposal responds appropriately to its immediate landscape setting.

Overall Character Evaluation

The Testing Framework does not conclude that lifestyle dwellings are inherently appropriate or inappropriate within the Barossa.

Rather, it demonstrates that the evaluation extends beyond the merits of an individual dwelling to consider its relationship with the productive landscape and its potential contribution to cumulative regional change.

A dwelling that is appropriately sited, designed and integrated into the landscape may respond positively to local character. However, repeated examples of similar development have the potential to gradually alter the productive, landscape, settlement and community relationships that collectively define the Barossa.

Professional planning judgement should therefore consider not only whether the proposal complies with statutory planning policy, but also whether it strengthens or weakens the long-term character of the region.

Character Reflection

This example demonstrates one of the central purposes of the Testing Framework.

A statutory planning assessment may conclude that an individual dwelling is capable of approval. The Testing Framework introduces a broader perspective by considering how repeated discretionary decisions may cumulatively reshape the Barossa over time.

Rather than determining the outcome of an individual application, the Framework provides a transparent and consistent methodology for recognising these broader character implications, supporting planning decisions that balance individual proposals with the long-term stewardship of the Barossa as a living productive and cultural landscape.

The Testing Framework represents the culmination of this review, translating legislative intent, planning policy, research and stakeholder knowledge into a practical methodology for understanding and assessing regional character.

Rather than prescribing fixed design outcomes, it supports informed professional judgement by providing a consistent framework for interpreting the relationships that define the Barossa. In doing so, it reinforces the principle that preserving character is not about preventing change, but about ensuring future change strengthens the distinctive landscape, settlement, productive, cultural and community relationships that continue to shape the Barossa as a living cultural landscape.

The Testing Framework is intended to support consistent consideration of regional character regardless of the assessment pathway or decision-making authority. Whether development is assessed by local government, State Government or another statutory body, the expectation should remain the same: proposals should demonstrate how they understand, respond to and strengthen the distinctive character of the Barossa. Consistent expectations across all forms of development provide greater confidence for applicants, decision-makers and the community, reinforcing that regional character is a shared responsibility rather than one determined by jurisdiction.

## 8.8 Character as Enduring Capacity

### Third Generation Planning

The planning profession has evolved through two important stages. The first focused on protecting assets: individual buildings, landscapes, vegetation and heritage places. The second recognised that the identity of a region cannot be understood through assets alone, leading to the protection of landscape character, settlement patterns and the relationships that make places distinctive.

The Character Assessment Framework presented in this section leans toward a third step and sets the foundation for future planning where character is no longer a static description of place, but the visible expression of enduring ecological, economic, cultural and civic capacity. This third generation is derived from principles for **designing living systems.**

Many planning frameworks begin with **land.**

Some begin with **policy.**

Some begin with **economics.**

**Ours begins with relationships.**

We are aiming to evolve planning into a practice of nurturing the relationships that allow a place - the Barossa - to remain recognisably itself while becoming what it needs to become. As such, we are shifting to co-creating and cultivating the conditions for mutually beneficial change. In this context, every decision should strengthen the enduring capacity of the landscape and settlement to express its distinctive character, support its communities, regenerate its ecological systems, and sustain its cultural and economic life.

We have acknowledged repeatedly that character is not simply something that exists to be preserved. It is something continually produced through the interaction of environmental systems, productive economies, cultural practices, institutions and communities over time. If these systems remain healthy, character renews itself. If they weaken, character gradually erodes, even where individual heritage places or landscapes remain intact.

The purpose of planning therefore extends beyond conserving what exists today. It becomes the stewardship of the long-term capacities that allow the Barossa to continue producing the qualities for which it is valued.

These capacities are ecological, economic, cultural and social. They include the capacity of landscapes to regenerate soils and biodiversity; the capacity of productive land to support globally recognised agriculture and viticulture; the capacity of towns to adapt while remaining recognisably Barossan; the capacity of institutions to transfer knowledge across generations; and the capacity of communities to welcome newcomers while sustaining identity and belonging.

This represents a subtle but important shift in planning practice. Rather than asking only *What should be protected?* decision-makers also ask *What capacities must be strengthened so this place can continue to thrive over the next century?*

This perspective changes how cumulative impacts are understood. Individual decisions are no longer assessed alone, but according to whether they strengthen or diminish the region's enduring capacity. Development is judged not only by immediate compliance, but by its contribution to the long-term performance of the whole regional system.

This does not intend in any way to replace the Planning and Design Code. Rather, it provides a coherent interpretive framework that connects strategic planning, statutory assessment and long-term stewardship. Character becomes the bridge between environmental resilience, productive landscapes, settlement design, cultural identity and economic prosperity.

Ultimately, this is a framework about inheritance.

Every planning decision either strengthens or weakens the capacities that future generations will inherit. Good planning therefore becomes an act of stewardship—not simply preserving the Barossa of today, but ensuring that the Barossa continues to produce its distinctive landscapes, communities and economy for centuries to come.

| Generation | Planning Question | Primary Tool | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Basic | *What should be protected?* | Land use and controls | Rules based |
| Intermediate | *How should change occur?* | Character, performance, design guidance | Performance based |
| Advanced | *What conditions enable a place to continually thrive?* | Systems stewardship, capability, adaptive governance | Capacity based |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Basic | Describe character | Protect values | Regulate development | Manage land use |
| Intermediate | Enable better decisions | Build shared stewardship | Support adaptive governance | Grow place capability |
| Advanced | Transform systems | Build regenerative capacity | Redesign institutions | Manage living systems |

## 8.9 Design Advisory Guidance

### A recognised pathway within the planning system

### Precedents Within the Planning System

South Australia's planning system already recognises the value of non-statutory design guidance alongside statutory policy.

Design Advisory Guidelines currently support both the Historic Area Overlay and Character Area Overlay, helping applicants, designers and assessment authorities understand how desired character outcomes can be translated into development and design decisions. PlanSA describes Historic Area Statements as establishing the attributes to be protected or complemented, with advisory guidelines supporting interpretation of the Overlay.

The State's existing guidance therefore establishes an important precedent: policy establishes the expectation; design guidance helps people understand how to respond to it.

This distinction is particularly valuable for character, where qualities of place cannot always be reduced to numerical standards.




### Opportunity for The Barossa

The existing State model demonstrates that advisory guidance can sit beside statutory provisions without creating another assessment pathway.

The opportunity is to make the existing system more intelligible, place-responsive and usable.

The work undertaken through this project already provides much of the foundation: regional and landscape character statements, productive dualities, design principles, stress tests, landscape relationships and questions for evaluating change.

A Barossa Design Advisory Guide, to be developed alongside updated Barossa Character Preservation District Overlay policy, could translate this knowledge into practical guidance for landowners, applicants, designers, planners and decision-makers.

Whereas the planning system seeks to know if proposals comply, guidance can help to determine how proposal contribute to Barossa character. A guide may also be supported by a participatory process and design stewarding network.

Used particularly during project conception and pre-application discussions, a guide could encourage better proposals before positions become fixed—supporting greater certainty, clearer conversations and stronger design outcomes.

Working synergistically,

**The Code provides the policy framework.**

**The Character Statements describe what matters.**

**Design guidance can demonstrate how development responds.**

## Towards a Barossa Design Advisory Guide

### Translating regional character into better development

### A Future Barossa Design Advisory Guide

Existing State character guidance focuses understandably on built character and streetscape. As established by this report, the Barossa is much richer spatially and systemically and Barossa character arises through relationships between landscape, settlement, productive systems, community, heritage and change.

Furthermore, The existing State system understandably speaks about what development should protect and complement whereas this report has asked where development can contribute to regional character and not merely minimise its impact.

There is potential for similar advisory guidelines to be developed alongside updated Barossa Character Preservation District Overlay policy.

**Sample Structure for a Barossa Design Advisory Guide**

**1. Understanding Barossa Character**

Introduce the Regional Character Statement, character principles and the idea of character as a living relationship between landscape, settlement and community.

**2. Reading the Landscape**

Locate proposals within the relevant landscape system and identify landform, productive landscape, waterways, vegetation, views, ridgelines and ecological relationships.

**3. Reading Settlement**

Understand township pattern, edges, streets, public realm, built form, infrastructure and relationships between settlement and countryside.

**4. Reading Cultural Character**

Recognise heritage, identity, community values, productive traditions, Traditional Owner relationships and cultural memory.

**5. Understanding the Proposal**

Define what is changing: scale, intensity, land use, visibility, movement, infrastructure and cumulative implications.

**6. Designing for Contribution**

Apply the project's design principles to ask how development can reinforce rather than merely avoid harming character.

**7. Testing Change**

Use the Character Test Cases / Stress Tests and productive dualities to examine cumulative change, fragmentation, visual intrusion, productive land and other recurring concerns.

**8. Responding to Place**

Provide design guidance for siting, scale, form, landscape, materials, interfaces, signage, access, infrastructure and adaptation appropriate to different contexts.

**9. Demonstrating the Response**

Show applicants how to communicate the design response through diagrams, landscape analysis, sections, views, precedent and concise design statements.

**10. Learning Through Application**

Use demonstration projects and future applications to test and progressively improve the guidance.

**Every proposal could be encouraged to demonstrate:**

**UNDERSTAND** What is here? *Protecting Character*

Landscape · Settlement · Community · Character · Relationships · Values

**RESPOND** How does the proposal belong? *Designing with Character*

Siting · Scale · Form · Landscape · Use · Experience · Materiality

**CONTRIBUTE** What does it leave stronger? *Contribution to Character*

Character · Productive Landscape · Community · Ecology · Prosperity · Future Generations

As in all things, what is needed here is leadership - and there are only ever two ingredients in that - courage and imagination. Because it is imagination that sketches the broader perspectives, providing patterns and frameworks to encompass myriad elements that would otherwise remain unwoven.

**Paul Keating**

# 9. Ways Forward



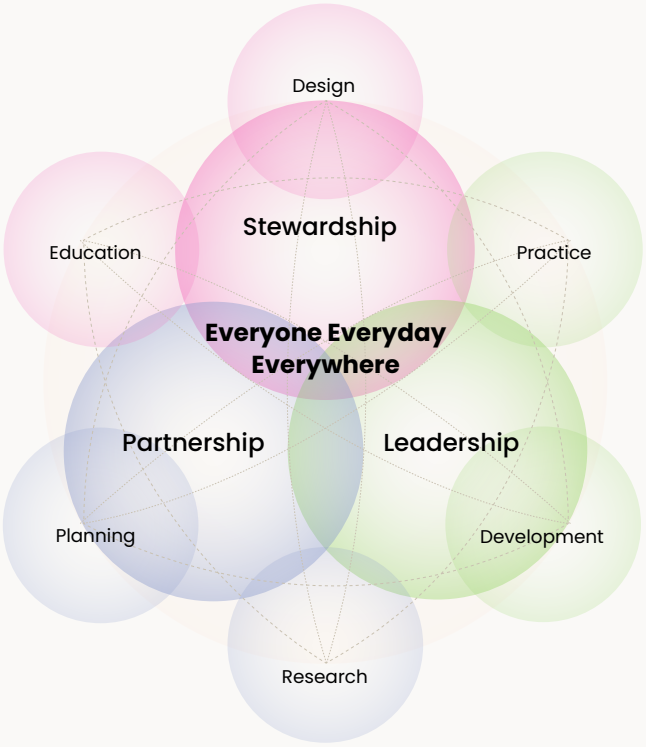



## 7. Character Framework

## 8. Design Principles and Testing Framework

## 9. Ways Forward

9.1 Regeneration Framework
9.2 Innovation Infrastructure
9.3 Immediate Actions and Four Horizons
9.4 Barossa 2050




## Now, Near, Next, New Generations Barossa

This report establishes a comprehensive evidence base for understanding, protecting and enhancing the distinctive character of the Barossa region. Through the identification of regional and landscape character values, the preparation of character statements, and the development of design principles, the project provides a foundation for more informed and character-responsive decision-making.

The work also highlights a broader opportunity. While character is widely recognised as one of the Barossa's defining assets, there remains a gap between character aspirations, planning policy and development assessment outcomes. The findings of this report suggest pathways for strengthening this relationship through future implementation, testing, monitoring and innovation initiatives.

The following opportunities are presented as a potential staged transition program for future consideration by the Councils together with its partners.

This report has also established a comprehensive character-led approach to regional regeneration that integrates ecological resilience, cultural continuity and adaptive governance. The challenge now is to move beyond individual projects and policy recommendations towards an enduring framework that can guide investment, collaboration, decision-making and learning over time.

The following series of diagrams presents this framework as a progression from concept to implementation. Beginning with the underlying **operating system for regeneration**, it then translates these principles into an innovation infrastructure organised around ecological, governance and cultural continuities, before outlining staged pathways for development across increasing scales of participation, capability and impact. Together, these diagrams provide a practical roadmap for building the long-term institutional capacity needed to support regenerative development in the Barossa and establish a world leading model that can be adapted and transferred to other places.

# 9. Ways Forward

## Investing in the Future Capacity of the Barossa

The Barossa has always been shaped by people who looked beyond the immediate horizon.

Across generations, Traditional Owners, farming families, communities, businesses and institutions have invested not only in land and buildings, but in knowledge, relationships, stewardship and shared purpose. The landscapes valued today are the accumulated result of actions over time—each responding to immediate needs while contributing, intentionally or otherwise, to the region inherited by future generations.

This report argues that preserving the Barossa's character is the enduring capacity of a living region to adapt, prosper and remain recognisably itself through change. That requires new ways of working and a different kind of investment.

Throughout this report we have developed a framework that begins with shared values and worldviews, translating these into regional design principles, applies them through character assessment and planning decisions, and ultimately asks a more fundamental question:

***What capacities must the Barossa strengthen if its distinctive character is to flourish over the next twenty-five, fifty, one hundred years and seven generations?***

Viewed this way, planning becomes an investment in the ecological, cultural, economic and social systems that allow places to continue creating exponential value. Some of those capacities already exist in abundance.

The Barossa possesses internationally recognised productive landscapes, remarkable cultural heritage, strong local identity, community leadership, deep agricultural knowledge and growing partnerships across government, industry and research. These strengths provide an exceptional foundation for future prosperity. Yet the challenges ahead are equally significant.

Climate change, housing pressures, changing agricultural systems, biodiversity decline, evolving economies and demographic change will all reshape the region. Responding successfully will require more than good policy. It will require institutions capable of learning, collaboration across sectors, investment in knowledge, and governance that supports adaptation without losing identity.

For this reason, the directions, ideas, recommendations presented in this section extend far beyond planning controls. Together they describe the enabling infrastructure needed to support long-term regional stewardship: leadership, research, partnerships, design, education, monitoring and collaborative governance. Individually these initiatives are practical. Collectively they form an innovation ecosystem capable of continually strengthening the Barossa's regional character.

The four horizons that follow recognise that transformation occurs progressively. Some actions can begin immediately through existing policy, guidance and partnerships. Others require broader collaboration across local government, state agencies, industry and community. Over time these investments build from better planning decisions toward a mature regional capability—one that not only preserves character but continually regenerates it.

It is an invitation to invest in the long-term capacity of the Barossa so that future generations inherit productive landscapes and distinctive settlements, and the knowledge, relationships, institutions and confidence needed to continue their care.

## 9.1 Regeneration Framework

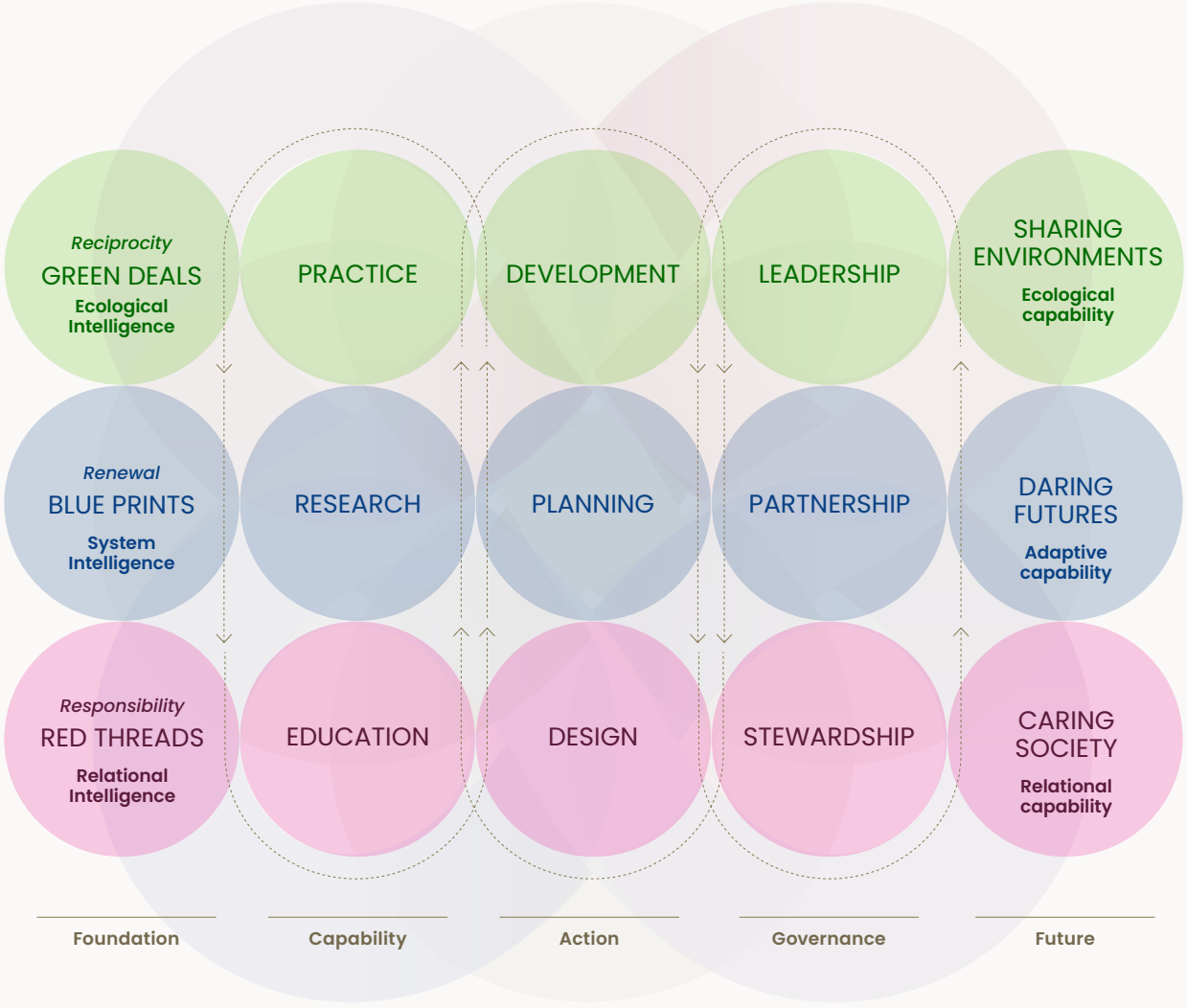
Rather than proposing a fixed implementation plan, the framework establishes an adaptive innovation infrastructure that continuously builds ecological, governance and cultural capability while supporting iterative planning, investment and stewardship.

### Regeneration Operating System

The Regeneration Operating System provides the conceptual architecture that underpins the framework. Rather than treating environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes as separate domains, it brings them together through three mutually reinforcing forms of intelligence: **ecological intelligence** (Green), **systems intelligence** (Blue) and **relational intelligence** (Red).

These are expressed through five interconnected stages—foundation, capability, action, governance and outcomes—creating an integrated system in leadership, partnership and stewardship reinforce one another.

The result is an adaptive operating system that builds capability while enabling continuous learning, collaboration and long-term regeneration.



## 9.2 Innovation Infrastructure

This framework is operationalised through three mutually reinforcing continuities. Rather than treating ecology, governance and culture as separate sectors, each continuity develops complementary capabilities that together support long-term regeneration.

### Institutional Architecture

The Green, Blue and Red domains become operational through three enduring continuities. Ecological continuity sustains environmental capability, governance continuity coordinates decision-making and investment, and cultural continuity maintains identity, stewardship and long-term learning.

The nine functions or "institutional capabilities" become a staged implementation program progressing from local grounding through regional capability building to national leadership.

FROM REPORT SECTION 1. OBJECTIVES SYNTHESIS, PAGE 19

REGENERATION

CULTURAL CONTINUITY

FOUNDATION

*Identity, Knowledge, Shared Values*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Education | Regional Identity | *Protect identity through shared understanding.* |
| Design | Landscape Stewardship | *Express identity through place.* |
| Stewardship | Collaborative Governance | *Care for place together across generations.* |

GOVERNANCE CONTINUITY

CAPABILITY

*Ambitions translate Values into Institutions*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Research | Place-Based Decision Making | *Community values informing evidence.* |
| Planning | Character Integration | *Character embedded into planning.* |
| Partnership | Implementation Excellence | *Practical tools and coordinated delivery.* |

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY

ACTION

*Ambitions become Regional Outcomes*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Practice | Prosperity through Character | *Character and economy reinforce one another.* |
| Development | Adaptive Growth | *Balancing preservation with change.* |
| Leadership | Regional Leadership | *The Barossa as a benchmark region.* |

## 9.3 Immediate Actions and Four Horizons

The recommendations that follow provide a practical pathway for translating this Strategy into long-term regional capability. As a weaved implementation program, they are organised across four horizons, recognising that meaningful change occurs progressively through learning, partnership and investment. Immediate actions focus on embedding the report within existing planning processes and establishing the foundations for implementation. The subsequent horizons describe how these foundations can expand into regional practice, demonstration projects, institutional capability and long-term innovation.
Together they provide a staged framework for building the knowledge, governance and collaborative capacity needed to strengthen the Barossa's distinctive character into the future.

WAYS FORWARD INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONS

REGENERATION

CULTURAL CONTINUITY

| | |
|---|---|
| Education | Share knowledge through continuous learning |
| Design | Shape places with enduring character |
| Stewardship | Care for place across generations |

GOVERNANCE CONTINUITY

| | |
|---|---|
| Research | Build evidence for better decisions |
| Planning | Align decisions across place and time |
| Partnership | Connect people, sectors and resources |

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY

| | |
|---|---|
| Practice | Translate ideas into everyday action |
| Development | Mobilise investment for lasting change |
| Leadership | Set direction and inspire collective action |

## Next Steps
### Implementation in the planning system

The next stage of this project will be critical as it will require translation of the draft character principles into a format that can then be readily applied to the Planning and Design Code. The updated policy when approved through the Code Amendment process will form part of the statutory assessment of development proposals by both local and state planning authorities.

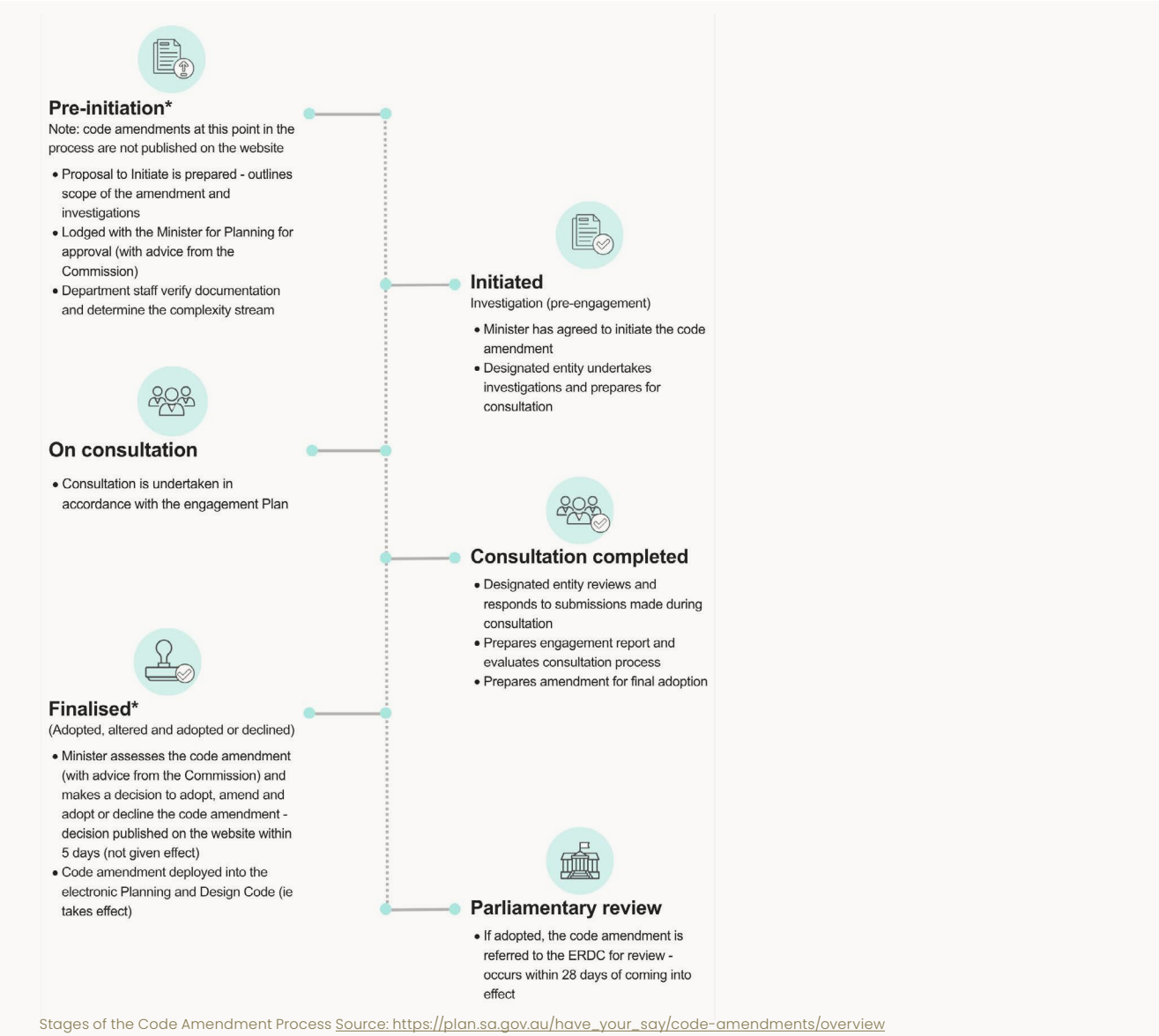
This report provides the foundations to establish updated code policy. It is critical to ensure new provisions for the Character Preservation District Overlay are drafted to integrate into the Planning and Design Code in accordance with the requirements of the 'Code Drafting Principles' – Guide to the Planning and Design Code.

Close collaboration between local government, state government and key stakeholders is essential to identify and address any transition complexities prior to initiating a Code Amendment, anticipated during 2027.

Consultation with the community and key stakeholders is planned to occur and is essential to the success of the project. The extent of consultation proposed is yet to be determined. An engagement plan shall be developed and endorsed by the Councils. Consultation through the Code Amendment process is also required.

Through continued collaboration and engagement, The Barossa Council and the Light Regional Council in collaboration with key stakeholders and the State Government will progress toward a Code Amendment that ensures the region's valued special character is recognised and enhanced into the future.

The Code Amendment process is outlined within the PlanSA website – Overview | PlanSA with the stages of the Code Amendment Process illustrated below.




Stages of the Code Amendment Process Source: https://plan.sa.gov.au/have_your_say/code-amendments/overview

## 3 Investments in Barossa's Future Capacity

This report has created something more valuable than a set of recommendations. It has established a shared body of knowledge, relationships, principles and practical frameworks through which the Barossa can navigate change while strengthening what makes the region distinctive.

The opportunity and potential exists to invest in that capacity rather than allow it to disperse.

Three actions could carry the work forward. Each performs a different role. Together they create a pathway from stewardship, through better decisions, to long-term innovation. They can begin at different scales and at different times, but each builds upon the investment already made through this report.

## Barossa 2050 _ A Living Region

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Community | + Council | + Industry |
| Culture | + Governance | + Prosperity |
| Identity | + Character | + Brand |
| Stewardship | + Partnership | + Leadership |
| = 2050 Outcomes | | |
| A Region people belong to | A Region whose character endures | A Region leading global regeneration |

The next "chapter" does not require another report. It requires carrying forward the people, knowledge and momentum already assembled into an enduring regional capability.

### 1. BAROSSA STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

**Learning | Relationships | Shared stewardship**

Transition the Working Group into the nucleus of an enduring Barossa Stewardship Network.

Its purpose is not another layer of governance. It is to retain and grow the relationships, local knowledge and collective intelligence created through this process. The Network can test ideas, identify emerging issues, support early conversations, connect Council with community and industry, and progressively bring new voices into stewardship of the region.

**Immediate action:** Invite the Working Group to become the founding Design Stewards and establish a light-touch program of periodic learning, testing and dialogue.

**Investment:** Continuity, coordination and participation.

**Return:** Collaboration, trust and shared regional capability.

### 2. BAROSSA DESIGN GUIDE

**Living | Application | Collaborative Decision-making**

Translate the Regional Character Statements, Design Principles and Character Framework into a practical Barossa Design Guide, developed alongside future Character Preservation District Overlay policy.

The Guide creates the bridge between understanding character and acting upon it. It can help landowners, applicants, designers, planners and decision-makers understand what matters, read context and shape proposals that contribute positively to place.

Importantly, it need not create another statutory process. It can make the existing planning system more accessible, contextual and design-led, while providing a practical vehicle through which the considerable knowledge created by this report enters everyday practice.

**Immediate action:** Partner with Council and State Government to scope and prototype the Guide using the foudational work already completed.

**Investment:** Translation, testing and design.

**Return:** Greater certainty, better proposals and stronger character outcomes.

### 3. BAROSSA CO-LABORATORY

**Leading | Experimentation | Innovation**

The Barossa Co-laboratory provides the productive platform through which the region can begin building toward Barossa 2050. It creates a distributed environment in which industry, Council, community, Traditional Owners, practitioners and researchers can work together on real regional challenges.

The Barossa as a whole becomes a laboratory. Demonstration projects become opportunities to test ideas. Industry brings investment, enterprise and implementation capability. Council connects innovation with place and policy. Community brings lived knowledge, values and legitimacy. Learning is captured and reinvested into the next project.

Beginning with a small number of shared challenges, the Co-laboratory can grow through partnerships rather than infrastructure—building a culture of experimentation, demonstration and collective learning.

**Immediate action:** Convene industry and regional partners around one or two demonstration challenges emerging directly from this report.

**Investment:** Partnership, experimentation and co-investment.

**Return:** Innovation, productive capability and new forms of regional value.

## Immediate Actions

### FROM REPORT TO REGIONAL ROADMAP

### Committing to Continuation

This report provides more than a review of the Barossa's distinctive character. It establishes a practical foundation for a new generation of place-based planning that aligns local knowledge, regional aspirations and State policy. The immediate priority is to translate this shared understanding into action through collaborative implementation. Early investment should focus on refining the draft policy framework, strengthening the Testing Framework, expanding the regional evidence base and building confidence through continued engagement. These actions consolidate the substantial work already undertaken and provide the platform for broader collaboration across government, industry, Traditional Owners and the community. By investing now, Council demonstrates leadership while co-creating the conditions for long-term stewardship, better planning decisions and stronger regional partnerships.

| PHASE | RFQ Original Scope | Version 1 EXTRA | (April - July 2026 / 4 months) |
|---|---|---|---|
| PURPOSE | | Grounding | |
| SCALE | | Local / Regional Level | |
| Leadership | | 1. Objectives | *articulating WG collective aspirations, challenges, opportunities* |
| Development | | 2. Approach | *advancing participatory design, systems thinking, innovation* |
| Practice | **2. Strategic Directions** | 6. Strategic Directions | *designing for social, economic, environmental systems impacts* |
| Partnership | | 10. Ways Forward | *demonstrating value to the State, industry and community* |
| Planning | | 3. Planning Analysis | *highlighting tensions, gaps + identifying system leverage points* |
| Research | **1. Literature Review** | 4. Literature Review | *including 5 base docs, 7 original scope, 23 additional, 10 referenced* |
| Stewardship | | 5. Mission Mapping | *embedding Working Group local experience, knowledge, intelligence* |
| Design | **3. Character Statements** | 7. Character Statements | *detailing attributes, qualities, relationships with visual framework* |
| Education | **4. Design Principles** | 8. Design Principles and Testing Framework | *aligning with DHUD policies, principles, overlays* |
| | | | *creating a character assessment framework with 4 test cases* |

RECOMMENDED ELABORATION

| PHASE | RFQ Original Scope | Version 2 EXPANSION |
|---|---|---|
| PURPOSE | | Positioning |
| SCALE | | Local / Regional Level |
| | | Integrate ICOMOS / Burra Charter, Barossa Indigenous History working with Philip Jones |
| | | Integrate Adeliade University Report : Understanding Place-making in the Barossa |
| | | Integrate Barossa Grounds research, industry perspectives, global leading practice references |
| Leadership | **1. Objectives** | Fully integrate State Planning Policies, Principles, 33 Overlays and SPC Design Review process |
| Development | **2. Approach** | Detail township character framework, settlement edges, landscape interfaces, built form |
| Practice | **6. Strategic Directions** | Integrate Strategies: Regional Development Australia, Destination Management Plan, Barossa Australia |
| Partnership | **10. Ways forward** | Workshop test cases and long-term adaptability through future scenarios with Working Group |
| Planning | **3. Planning Analysis** | Detail regional character statements units, districts and boundaries to capture sub-zones |
| Research | **4. Literature Review** | Integrate additional 10-15 documents accumulated since initial review and revise |
| Stewardship | **5. Mission Mapping** | Add design stewarding co-creation process as a basis for continuous community engagement |
| Design | **7. Character Statements** | Expand character statements in detail with icons, images, graphic typologies including townships |
| Education | **8. Design Principles and Testing Framework** | Fully integrate indigenous design principles; detail Regional Regenerative Principles |
| | | Work with planners to test framework, identify demonstration pilots |

| PHASE | RFQ Original Scope | Version 2 Communication, Collaboration, Co-creation |
|---|---|---|
| PURPOSE | | Partnering |
| SCALE | | Local / Regional Level |
| | | Prepare foundation for transition of Working Group to Barossa Design Stewardship Network |
| | | Solicit broader review of report through trusted networks of the Working Group serving as translators |
| | | Workshop with WG, EM, Councils, Community - testing demonstration projects, cases and future scenarios |
| | | Prepare report versions for Councils' presentations and briefings |
| | | Prepare report version as open source platform for community |

## Horizon 1

NOW – FOUNDATION

Establishing Shared Understanding

The first horizon focuses on building a common language for regional character and embedding it within everyday planning practice. The emphasis is on improving consistency, confidence and transparency across decision-making. Investment during this phase delivers immediate value by strengthening policy translation, supporting planners and decision-makers, and providing practical tools that can be applied from day one. The outcome is greater certainty for applicants, stronger alignment between local and State priorities, and a shared foundation upon which future innovation can be built. This stage creates the institutional confidence necessary for more ambitious regional initiatives.

| PHASE | NOW |
|---|---|
| OBJECTIVE | Shared Language |
| PURPOSE | Guiding |
| SCALE | Regional / State Level |
| PROCESS | *Deep Listening* |
| VALUE | Confidence |
| IMPACT | Better Planning Decisions |
| KEY PARTNERS | Working Group with Council / Council Planners |
| | Council Elected Members |
| | Councils in Preservation Act : Light Regional, Mid-Murray, Adelaide Hills |
| | State Government DHUD Planning |
| INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONS | |
| Leadership | Act-to-Code Translation to Policy Framework |
| Development | Township Character Statements, Built Form Statements |
| Practice | Character Assessment Framework testing and completion |
| Partnership | Cumulative, landscape, visual impact assessments |
| Planning | Burra Charter interpretation guide |
| Research | Assessment practice guide |
| Stewardship | Community co-creation platform design |
| Design | Regional Design Standards with DHUD |
| Education | Regional Character Glossary |
| STRATEGIC THREADS | NOW |
| Landscape & Environmental Systems | Landscape character mapping and integration |
| Sustainability & Resilience | Environmental baseline assessment |
| Growth & Shared Prosperity | Mission and impact mapping for new narratives |
| Governance & Collaboration | Stakeholder and partner mapping via KUMU |
| Co-Investment & Transformational Capital | Alignment with State initiatives, priorities, strategy |
| Legislation / Policy / Regulation | Identify key landscapes systems for protection |
| Livability & Wellbeing | Deep data and baseline daignostics and evidence |
| Design Quality & Place | Housing, development, tourism innovation + futures |
| Identity, Heritage & Character | Cultural mapping with local knowledge and stories |

## Horizon 2

### NEAR – STRATEGIC TRANSLATING

### Building Regional Capability

Once a common foundation has been established, the focus shifts towards coordination across landscapes, settlements and institutions. Investment at this stage strengthens the region's collective capability by integrating planning, research, infrastructure, conservation and community knowledge into shared regional strategies.

Recognising the importance of cumulative impact, the Barossa begins planning proactively for long-term change. This creates better alignment between investment, environmental stewardship and economic development while reducing future planning conflict. The principal outcome is a region that increasingly works as a coordinated system versus a collection of separate decisions.

| PHASE | NEAR |
|---|---|
| | **STRATEGY** |
| | **Translation** |
| OBJECTIVE | Shared Practice |
| PURPOSE | Testing |
| SCALE | State Level |
| PROCESS | *Broad Participation* |
| VALUE | Alignment |
| IMPACT | Better Regional Coordination |
| KEY PARTNERS | Community, Traditional Owners, Landholders, Businesses, Industry |
| | Barossa and Light Councils Staff |
| | State Planning Commission / Assessors, Policy-makers / State-wide Government Agencies |
| | Council with an SA Preservation Act : McLaren Vale / Onkaparinga |
| INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONS | |
| Leadership | Character Preservation Overlay |
| Development | Township edge planning and strategy |
| Practice | Landscape planning and strategy |
| Partnership | Strategic growth planning and strategy |
| Planning | Infrastructure planning and strategy |
| Research | State research partnerships |
| Stewardship | Heritage and conservation strategies |
| Design | Rural Design Guide together with DHUD |
| Education | Knowledge hub and learning platform |
| STRATEGIC THREADS | NOW |
| Landscape & Environmental Systems | Integrated landscape management scheme |
| Sustainability & Resilience | Landscape-scale monitoring and evlauation |
| Growth & Shared Prosperity | Diversified prosperity linked to place strength |
| Governance & Collaboration | Governance agencies and tiers alignment |
| Co-Investment & Transformational Capital | Strategic innovation portfolio of initiatives to 2035 |
| Legislation / Policy / Regulation | Monitoring landscape + environmental change program |
| Livability & Wellbeing | Life Quality and Well-being Place-based Indicators |
| Design Quality & Place | New Narratives Pathways co-created with Community |
| Identity, Heritage & Character | Design stewardship network and review framework |

## Horizon 3

### NEXT – STRUCTURAL TRANSITION

### Demonstrating Regional Leadership

The third horizon moves from strategy into implementation. Pilot projects, demonstration programs and performance-based (and eventually capability oriented) planning allow new ideas to be tested before broader adoption. Investment during this phase builds practical evidence showing how character-led planning can deliver better environmental, economic and community outcomes simultaneously. Regional partnerships expand, monitoring systems mature and adaptive management becomes part of everyday governance. This is where the Barossa begins contributing knowledge beyond its own boundaries, demonstrating how regional character can become a driver of innovation, investment and resilience.

| PHASE | NEXT |
|---|---|
| | **STRUCTURE** |
| | **Transition** |
| OBJECTIVE | Shared Evidence |
| PURPOSE | Demonstrating |
| SCALE | National Level |
| PROCESS | *Highest Quality* |
| VALUE | Capability |
| IMPACT | Better Places and Investment |
| KEY PARTNERS | Investors, Institutions, Organisations |
| | Built Environment - Architects, Planners, Developers |
| | Federal Government |
| | Councils Bordering Barossa: Playford, Gawler |
| INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONS | |
| Leadership | Demonstration projects |
| Development | Design, Planning, Development Guide |
| Practice | Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning (MEL) Framework |
| Partnership | National Regional Design Standards pilot |
| Planning | Performance-based Planning pilots |
| Research | National research partnerships |
| Stewardship | Regional stewardship network |
| Design | Life long Eco Education Program |
| Education | Character education and training resources |
| STRATEGIC THREADS | NOW |
| Landscape & Environmental Systems | Landscape restoration pilots |
| Sustainability & Resilience | Landscape-led urban form / ecological connectivity |
| Growth & Shared Prosperity | Integrated regional cooperative model |
| Governance & Collaboration | Collaborative / shared governance platform |
| Co-Investment & Transformational Capital | Strategic co-investment framework |
| Legislation / Policy / Regulation | Policy Sandbox for continuous adaption |
| Livability & Wellbeing | Adaptive systems responding to future challenges |
| Design Quality & Place | Character-aligned investment + development pilots |
| Identity, Heritage & Character | Value / perfomance / impact co-design processes |

## Horizon 4

### NEW – SYSTEMS TRANSFORMING

### Creating an Enduring Legacy

The final horizon represents a mature regional operating system where stewardship becomes embedded across institutions. Continuous learning, research partnerships, digital technologies and international collaboration support ongoing adaptation as conditions change. Investment shifts from maintaining individual initiatives to strengthening the long-term capability of the region itself. The result is a resilient Barossa that continues to evolve while retaining the qualities that make it distinctive. Character becomes an enduring capacity that generates prosperity, belonging, environmental resilience and cultural continuity across generations.

| PHASE | NEW |
|---|---|
| | **SYSTEM** |
| | **Transformation** |
| OBJECTIVE | Shared Culture |
| PURPOSE | Innovating |
| SCALE | International Level |
| PROCESS | *Long-term Value* |
| VALUE | Legacy |
| IMPACT | Regenerative Regional Prosperity |
| INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONS | |
| Leadership | Regional Cultural Regeneration System |
| Development | Regional Settlement Pattern Design Guidelines |
| Practice | Digital Twin and spatial technologies |
| Partnership | Guide / Play / Handbook for Cultural Regeneration |
| Planning | Transferable planning methodologies |
| Research | International research partnerships |
| Stewardship | Global Annual Character Forum |
| Design | Character Innovation Institute |
| Education | Regional Character Observatory |
| STRATEGIC THREADS | |
| Landscape & Environmental Systems | Predictive landscape intelligence for regeneration |
| Sustainability & Resilience | Climate positive and resilent communities model |
| Growth & Shared Prosperity | Barossa Doughnut Economy and learning program |
| Governance & Collaboration | Barossa Co-Laboratory and Global Partnerships |
| Co-Investment & Transformational Capital | Prosperity-through-character new value creation |
| Legislation / Policy / Regulation | Adaptive systems responding to future challenges |
| Livability & Wellbeing | Next Generation Leadership |
| Design Quality & Place | Next Generation Partnership |
| Identity, Heritage & Character | Next Generation Stewardship |

## 9.4 Barossa 2050

### Imagining a Regional Campus

A successful region is one that gives young people reasons to stay, places to create, opportunities to lead, and responsibilities worth inheriting.

**Future Barossa Learning Spaces**

**Places for Culture**
Story Houses
Cultural Exchange Kitchens
Heritage Studios
Music Barns
Festival Academies
Memory Gardens

**Places for Governance**
Community Assemblies
Youth Councils
Stewarding Ateliers
Policy Sandboxes
Citizen Juries
Collaborative Planning Units

**Places for Enterprise**
Regenerative Business Incubators
Doughnut Economy Action Labs
Creative Cooperatives
Food Innovation Kitchens
Social Enterprise Accelerators
Public Design Hubs

**Places for Making**
Maker Commons
Craft Foundries
Repair Academies
Fabrication Barns
Edible Schoolyards
Biomaterial Incubator

**Places for Discovery**
Landscape Observatories
Citizen Science Networks
Biodiversity Stations
Climate Learning Landscapes
Night Sky Laboratories
Seasonal Learning Trails

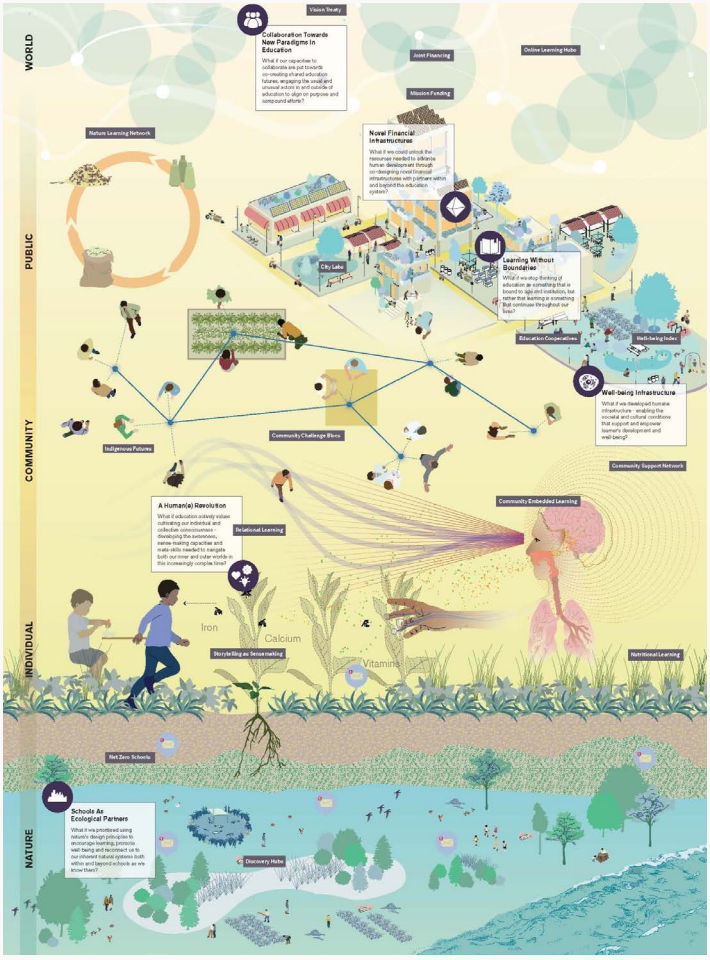



Image: Dark Matter Labs.

**Future Barossa Civic Archetypes**

Regenerative Ambassadors
Character Diplomats
Global Cross-pollinators

Systems Choreographers
Cultural Custodians
Civic Constellators

Community Fusionists
Cooperative Orchestrators
Place Weavers

Digital Artisans
Spiral Learners
Story Keepers

Renewal Crusaders
Ecological Restorers
Water Harvesters

### Growing the Next Generation

The Barossa can become a place - a campus - where every generation grows more capable, more connected, more culturally rich and more ecologically resilient, building upon generations past and passing on to the next generation. Every investment in landscape, education, enterprise, governance and culture is ultimately an investment in human capability. A thriving region is one where every generation develops the confidence, knowledge and responsibility to care for place and contribute beyond it.

This strategy imagines the Barossa as a lifelong learning ecosystem where homes, farms, wineries, workshops, schools, public spaces and landscapes become connected places of discovery. Learning is no longer confined to classrooms or careers; it becomes embedded within everyday life, shared across generations, disciplines and cultures. Traditional Owner knowledge sits alongside scientific research. Craft traditions evolve through digital innovation. Local practice connects with global networks. Each exchange strengthens the region while preparing its people to participate confidently in an interconnected world.

The civic archetypes described here are not occupations but ways of contributing. They represent the qualities required of future stewards: curiosity, creativity, collaboration and care. Likewise, the new places of learning are not institutions alone, but environments where ideas are tested, relationships are built and public value is co-created.

The Barossa's greatest legacy will not only be the character and landscapes it preserves or the industries it sustains. It will be the generations it inspires—people who inherit a remarkable region and choose, in turn, to leave it more thriving than found.

# 10. Appendices





# 10. Appendices

Appendix –
Core Literature Review

# Appendix –
# Core Literature Review

# CONTENTS

**01. Core Strategic and Policy Review ..... 3**

Barossa Character Values Community Engagement Report ..... 3

Character Values Policy Statements ..... 5

Barossa Valley and McClaren Vale Character Preservation ..... 7

Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area ..... 10

Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area ..... 11

Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area ..... 14

Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area ..... 17

**02. References ..... 21**

# 01. Core Strategic and Policy Review

## Barossa Character Values Community Engagement Report

26 February 2013
URS Australia

The five-character values are set. Everything that follows is essentially about unpacking them rather than questioning them:

- landscape and visual amenity
- heritage
- townships
- agriculture/viticulture
- tourism

This frames the entire engagement process. The community isn't being asked what matters, that's already defined, they're being asked to describe and validate what sits under those headings.

The document moves into how engagement was approached. There's a deliberate attempt to:

- be transparent about how decisions will be made
- acknowledge that previous input hasn't always translated into outcomes
- avoid over-consulting while still getting meaningful input

There's also a clear statement that, despite all of this engagement, the final decisions sit with the Minister. That tension between local input and State control is sitting there from the start.

The workshop format is structured around three broad lenses:

- landscape,
- townships, and
- economy

Which loosely group the five-character values. The questions they ask are simple but still quite effective:

- what makes the Barossa what it is
- what needs to be protected
- what should the future look like

What comes out of that isn't consensus, it's themes - that's consistent throughout the document. It's less about agreement and more about identifying recurring patterns in how people think about the place.

When you get into the workshop outputs, the same ideas come up repeatedly, just from different angles.

There's a strong emphasis on the landscape not just as scenery, but as something working, ie. something tied to agriculture, history, and identity. People are clearly concerned about maintaining that balance between human activity and the natural environment, rather than freezing it in time.

Townships are talked about in a similar way. There's support for growth, but only where it feels consistent with what's already there. There's also a lot of sensitivity around edges;

- how towns meet the landscape,
- how development creeps, and
- how easily that character can shift if it's not handled well.

Heritage isn't framed as something static either. There's a desire to protect it, but also to keep it viable—adaptive reuse comes up, and there's recognition that new buildings will be part of the future character whether people like it or not. The issue is less about stopping change and more about how well it's done.

When the discussion shifts to the economy, it becomes more direct. Agriculture is seen as fundamental, not just economically, but culturally. There's a strong push to protect productive land, but at the same time there's acknowledgement that farming needs flexibility to remain viable. That includes diversification and adapting to changing conditions (hobby farms, horticulture zoning etc.)

Tourism sits slightly differently. It's clearly valued, but even at this stage there are hints of concern, particularly around how it's managed, how it integrates with the landscape, and whether it risks undermining the very qualities people come for.

As the document moves into the summary of themes, it starts to consolidate what's been said, but nothing particularly new emerges, it just reinforces the same tensions:

- protect vs evolve
- consistency vs diversity
- local identity vs external pressures

One thing that does come through more clearly at this point is the idea that the Barossa isn't a single condition. There are sub-areas, different landscapes, different townships, and that variation is part of the character. It's not something to smooth out.

When the draft character statements are introduced later in the document, they formalise a lot of what's been said earlier. The language becomes more structured, but the underlying ideas don't really change;

- The landscape is described as a blend of natural systems and human activity.
- Heritage is tied to both built form and ongoing cultural practices.
- Townships are acknowledged as layered and evolving.
- Agriculture is positioned as central but needing to adapt.
- Tourism is recognised as important but something that needs to be carefully integrated.

What is noticeable, though, is that while the document is quite strong at describing character, it doesn't really resolve how to deal with competing pressures. It identifies them clearly, particularly around land use, development, and economic change, but stops short of providing a clear mechanism for managing them.

By the time you get to the end, it's clear that the output of this process was always intended to feed into State planning policy, specifically the Planning Strategy and Development Plans. The role of the community was to inform that, but not to control it.

# Character Values Policy Statements

16 April 2013
The Barossa Council

Council is trying to formalise what came out of that engagement into something that can sit in policy.

The opening pages are procedural. It's essentially a Council report recommending that the draft character value statements and mapping be endorsed and progressed into the Planning Strategy. It states that the statements are:

- representative of community views from earlier consultation, and
- intended for inclusion into State planning frameworks

**Rural landscape and visual amenity**

This section reads quite strongly. It describes the Barossa as:

- distinct from metropolitan Adelaide
- defined by its settlement pattern and open rural structure
- made up of a mix of fields, vines, orchards and settlements

There's also a clear acknowledgement that character comes from sub-regions, not just the whole.

The policy direction is very clear and quite protective:

- maintain separation from suburban Adelaide
- protect biodiversity and natural features
- protect key views
- ensure built form responds to landscape
- reinforce the rural character through land use

It's not just about stopping things, it still allows for:

- reuse of rural structures
- continued farming activity

**Scenic and tourism attributes**

It recognises:

- the Barossa as an international tourism destination
- the combination of wine, food, heritage and landscape as the drawcard

There's a clear push to:

- broaden the tourism base
- enable investment in tourism infrastructure

So unlike the landscape section, this one is more enabling.

But then it does highlight:

- don't lose agricultural land
- don't compromise heritage
- maintain the integrity of place

This highlights a tension within the same section:

encourage tourism → but don't let it undermine what it depends on

**Built form of townships**

It describes townships as:

- distinct from each other
- loosely arranged
- tied closely to surrounding agriculture

The policies are quite specific:

- maintain separation between towns
- avoid suburban-style subdivision
- reinforce existing development patterns
- keep edges low scale
- focus higher density toward centres

At the same time, there is still allowance for:

- mixed use
- increased density in selected areas

It's not anti-growth, but it is trying to control where and how it happens.

**Viticulture, agriculture and associated industries**

It reinforces that:

- agriculture is central to identity
- not just economically, but visually and culturally

It also acknowledges:

- diversity beyond wine (livestock, cropping, forestry)
- that monoculture is not desirable

The policies try to balance:

- protecting productive land
- allowing flexibility for farmers

Key points:

- avoid loss of high-value agricultural land
- allow farming to adapt to market/environment
- avoid new uses that undermine existing operations
- support value-adding activities

**Heritage attributes**

It frames heritage as:

- both built and landscape-based
- something that reflects economic and social history
- something that continues to evolve

There's strong support for:

- protecting historic fabric
- integrating new development appropriately
- adaptive reuse

The approach is not don't change anything, but more, change it in a way that still reads as Barossa.

# Barossa Valley and McClaren Vale Character Preservation

## Addendum to two volumes of the South Australian Planning Strategy: The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide and Murray Mallee Region Plan

December 2013
Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, Government of South Australia

Right from the introduction, the document establishes that the Character Preservation Acts were not intended as pure heritage lock-up legislation. The wording is more balanced than that. It talks about:

- recognising
- protecting
- and enhancing

special character *while also providing for economic, physical and social wellbeing*.

The document makes it clear that the legislation was specifically intended to stop urban sprawl extending north and south of Adelaide by restricting additional residential development in rural areas.

Even this early document acknowledges that "character is continuous" and extends beyond the mapped boundaries. The structure of the document is then built entirely around the five legislated character values:

- rural and natural landscape
- heritage
- township built form
- agriculture and viticulture
- scenic and tourism attributes.

As the document moves into the Barossa-specific section, the first thing that stands out is how carefully it describes the Barossa as a *diverse landscape*, not a singular one.

It describes:

- open grazing country
- broad hectare farming
- escarpments and ranges
- valley floor viticulture
- conservation areas
- wooded eastern areas
- watercourses
- forestry
- and different landscape characters across the district.

The document formalises this through the "Barossa Directions Inset Map", which identifies five broad landscape character areas:

- Barossa Range
- Barossa Valley Floor

- Eastern Barossa
- Western Barossa
- Watershed.

The next section on rural landscape and visual amenity starts establishing some of the key philosophical foundations that keep reappearing throughout all the later literature.

The Barossa is described as:

- distinct from metropolitan Adelaide
- defined by village townships within rural landscape
- shaped by open countryside
- and valued for expansive views and visible landscape structure.

The language is less about rules and more about:

- transitions
- settlement pattern
- views
- relationship between built form and landscape
- and harmony between natural and cultural systems.

That becomes even clearer in the policy section, where the document repeatedly talks about:

- preserving clear transitions between townships and rural landscape
- protecting important views
- ensuring development harmonises with landscape
- and reinforcing the rural landscape while still allowing diverse farming practices.

The document is not anti-change. It explicitly supports:

- re-use of buildings
- mixed farming
- economic viability of primary production
- and development needed to sustain agriculture.

The heritage section also feels broader than simple built heritage protection. It talks about:

- Indigenous custodianship
- settlement history
- economic history
- collective streetscapes
- farming practices
- stone walls
- and infrastructure patterns.

The policies reinforce this by encouraging:

- adaptive reuse
- integration of new and old
- and balancing heritage with new development.

The Barossa is described as:

- a “tapestry” of well-separated townships
- each with distinct identity
- village feel
- human scale

- and irregular edges.

The policies then become very direct:

- maintain separation between towns
- retain township identity
- avoid homogeneous suburban subdivisions
- reinforce low-scale edges
- and promote density only within selected township centres.

This is the backbone of many later concerns around:

- Concordia
- suburbanisation
- township merging
- edge conditions
- and codified development outcomes.

The Barossa is described not just as a wine region, but as a: “working agrarian landscape”.

The document repeatedly reinforces:

- diversity
- flexibility
- and evolution of farming systems.

It specifically says: “Local diversity enriches the district and avoids monoculture.”

The document openly acknowledges:

- climate adaptation
- changing farming practices
- and changing environmental conditions.

The policies in this section reinforce:

- balancing visual amenity and productive land use
- protecting agricultural land
- allowing flexible farming transitions
- and enabling value-adding activities connected to production.

The tourism section clearly supports tourism growth and investment. It openly talks about:

- broadening the economic base
- enabling tourism activities
- accommodation
- hospitality
- events
- arts
- retreats
- and visitor experiences.

It consistently qualifies this through:

- local context
- landscape quality
- scenic attributes
- and complementing special character.

The document already anticipated:

- tourism pressure
- balancing investment and protection
- flexible agriculture
- township growth
- adaptation
- design quality
- and changing economic conditions.

# Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area

## Document Review

23 January 2022
Paul Mickan, Consultant

The document starts by setting up why the review was needed. It looks back over roughly 20 years of planning work affecting the Barossa, including;

- State-led changes,
- urban boundary decisions,
- the 30-Year Plan,
- the Character Preservation legislation and
- the later planning reforms.

The main point early on is that Council has not been sitting still, it has responded to State processes, prepared its own studies, and tried to resolve character-related issues over time.

The review makes an important distinction. Some previous issues were addressed through the new Planning and Design Code, but others were not. In some cases, the Code has also created new issues. The document calls out that more land uses are now enabled through less restrictive assessment pathways, but there is not enough attention given to scale, built form and character impact, particularly in rural areas. Tourist accommodation is used as an example where the Code lacks clear direction.

**Character Preservation legislation**

It confirms the five established character values:

- rural and natural landscape,
- heritage,
- township built form,
- viticulture/agriculture and associated industries, and
- scenic/tourism attributes.

These remain the foundation of the whole framework. The issue is not really whether those values are right, it is whether the planning system gives enough detail to apply them properly.

It then explains that the original Character Preservation Overlay in the former Development Plans was only ever a high-level, stop-gap measure. Council and Light Regional Council later started Development Plan Amendments to strengthen the policy, but those processes were put on hold because the new Planning and Design Code was expected to address the gaps. The review is quite clear that this expectation was not met.

The Character Preservation District Overlay has been applied without enough analysis of the underlying zones and provides so little policy direction that it is difficult to see how it could be used to refuse a proposal. It also

identifies inconsistencies, such as the Overlay allowing more earthworks than general policy, and different treatment of renewable energy facilities across zones despite both being within the Overlay.

The review then turns to the 2017 legislation review. This section is useful because it shows that many issues were already known. Council had raised concerns about hobby farms, lifestyle dwellings, boundary realignments, limitation of design guidance, rural living provisions, and the need for better awareness of the Act across State Government. The document's tables show that many of these issues were either not addressed, not progressed, or remained unresolved.

The State Planning Policy section then shows another gap. The State Planning Policies only carry forward a small number of directions from the Planning Strategy Addendum. They refer to supporting primary industry, protecting landscape and encouraging tourism investment, but the review notes that the Code still does not provide enough clarity around value-adding, tourism activities, boundary realignments, design guidance or land-use interfaces.

The document then reviews the 2013 Strategic Directions Report. This is where you can see that a lot of the current issues are not new. The earlier report had already identified the need to review rural dwellings, wineries and ancillary development, tourism accommodation, higher density housing, township character, visual impact, ridgelines, farm buildings and design responses. Some matters were addressed, but many of the character, design and scale-related issues were either not addressed adequately or did not carry through into the Code.

The Rural Areas and Character Review section follows on from this. That earlier work had tried to combine the rural economy and character preservation into one policy response. It considered landscape character, building siting and design, interface/buffer management, primary production diversification, wineries, land division, rural dwellings and tourism. Council started a DPA from this work, but again it was paused because of the incoming Code. The review's conclusion is that many of the practical recommendations, especially around design guidance, panoramic views, farm building scale, strategic building envelopes and a possible Barossa design code, were not implemented.

As the document moves through the remaining review sections, the same pattern continues. The issues are not isolated. They keep coming back to the same practical problem: the Barossa has strong high-level intent, but the tools sitting underneath it are too generic. The Code may allow development more easily, but it does not always explain what form, scale or siting is appropriate for the Barossa.

The overall takeaway from this document is that the vision has not really been lost. The values are consistent, the issues have been well documented, and Council has already tried to resolve many of them.

# Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area

## Discussion Paper for the State Planning Commission

17 May 2022
Paul Mickan, Consultant

The document opens by acknowledging that the Planning and Design Code reforms did remove many barriers to value-adding, tourism and hospitality in rural areas. However, the immediate concern raised is that these changes were applied generically across the Barossa without enough regard for the uniqueness of the Character Preservation District.

Very early on, the paper establishes an important point that keeps resurfacing later:
the original Character Preservation policies introduced in 2013 were always intended as an interim or "holding" measure pending more detailed policy work. The expectation at the time was that future planning reform would properly resolve these issues, however the paper argues that this never really occurred.

The opening sections then move into a review of the broader planning history affecting the Barossa over the last 20 years:

- urban boundary discussions
- the 30-Year Plan
- Character Preservation legislation
- Development Plan Amendments
- Planning and Design Code reform

What stands out is the repeated pattern of studies, submissions and strategic work identifying similar concerns, but implementation not fully translating those concerns into workable policy tools. The paper references multiple previous reviews and notes that many earlier recommendations were effectively paused or deferred on the assumption that the new Code would eventually address them.

The document then categorises issues into three broad groups:

- straightforward anomalies/errors
- issues with partially developed solutions
- and larger unresolved strategic matters requiring stakeholder input

That distinction becomes important because much of the paper is really focused on the third category — the unresolved strategic gaps.

Unlike earlier engagement documents focused on broad community values, this process deliberately targeted industry, business and community stakeholders around four practical themes:

- character preservation
- township and settlement planning
- tourism/value-adding
- winery and beverage production

The draft vision section starts framing the Barossa less as a static heritage landscape and more as a working agrarian and economic system.

Several ideas emerge repeatedly through this section:

- the Barossa as a working agricultural landscape rather than a preserved museum
- balancing preservation with economic adaptability
- maintaining “right to farm”
- climate resilience and water security
- supporting creative and circular economies
- acknowledging different landscape units across the district
- and directing major future housing growth outside the Character Preservation area where possible.

There is also a very noticeable shift toward language around:

- adaptation
- regenerative agriculture
- renewable energy
- distributed systems
- and future economic transition

Importantly, the vision also starts identifying tensions the existing system struggles to reconcile:

- protecting productive land while still allowing economic diversification
- encouraging tourism while preventing landscape erosion
- allowing development without losing township distinction
- supporting housing without fragmenting rural land

The rural dwellings discussion becomes one of the strongest examples of this tension later in the paper.

As the document moves into the Character Preservation section itself, it raises significant concerns regarding the current Overlay. The central argument is essentially that: *despite the Character Preservation legislation, Planning Strategy Addendum and State Planning Policies, the actual day-to-day development tool — the Overlay is perceived as providing limited practical guidance for consistent assessment.*

The paper repeatedly points out that:

- the Overlay is only a few pages long
- most policies are generic
- very little is truly specific to the Barossa
- and there is limited guidance for applicants or planners to consistently assess proposals.

This becomes one of the strongest recurring themes of the whole paper: *there is a disconnect between high-level intent and practical implementation.*

The legislation review section identifies several structural gaps:

- still evolving review mechanisms
- ambiguity around boundary realignments
- less clearly articulation of Character Preservation intent within major project pathways
- and concern that State Planning Policies may provide limited influence over assessment outcomes.

Then the document moves into conflicts between Overlays and Zones, where it argues that some current Code pathways enable development outcomes inconsistent with Character Preservation intent.

Examples raised include:

- large-scale warehousing
- industrial activities
- renewable energy infrastructure
- significant earthworks
- and conflicting landscape overlays.

What becomes increasingly clear through these middle sections is that the concern is not necessarily development itself, but lack of calibration around:

- scale
- siting
- landscape response
- and cumulative impact.

That issue becomes even more pronounced in the sections on tourism and value-adding.

The tourism/value-adding section acknowledges that relaxing policies has supported investment opportunities, but argues the Code now provides less clearly defined control over:

- scale
- intensity
- built form
- infrastructure expectations
- and spatial direction.

A major recurring concern is that: *tourism uses are now broadly envisaged across rural areas without enough distinction between genuinely small-scale integrated tourism and more intensive commercial outcomes.*

The paper repeatedly refers to the earlier intent around “small-scale” tourism and argues that this language has largely disappeared from the Code.

The winery and beverage production section follows a similar line of thinking. It notes that wineries were previously treated as unique regional land uses with carefully developed policies tied to:

- vineyard connection
- production scale
- separation distances
- and protection from encroachment by sensitive uses.

The paper argues these specific protections were largely lost when wineries became grouped into generic "beverage production" categories under the new Code.

The rural dwellings section is probably one of the strongest concerns raised through the review. It outlines stakeholder concern that previous controls limiting rural dwelling proliferation were reduced during the transition to the Planning and Design Code, with potential implications for productive land, landscape character and land-use conflict. The concern isn't only visual character, but also:

- fragmentation of productive land
- interface conflict
- infrastructure pressure
- creation of de facto rural living
- and long-term cumulative erosion of rural character.

The paper repeatedly frames this as a cumulative issue rather than a single-development issue. That same cumulative concern appears again in the buffers and interface section, particularly around:

- vineyards adjacent to cropping
- wineries adjacent to housing
- tourist accommodation near primary production
- and broader rural land-use conflict.

Toward the end, the document consolidates the major unresolved issues into several broad themes:

- inadequate implementation tools
- uncertain clarity around tourism and value-adding scale
- loss of previous rural dwelling protections
- limited interface controls
- less clearly defined design guidance
- and lack of spatial direction for future growth.

By the conclusion, the paper is essentially arguing that: the strategic intent for Character Preservation largely already exists, but the practical mechanisms needed to consistently support implementation continue to evolve.

# Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area

## Strategic Directions Paper

15 September 2022
Paul Mickan, Consultant

Right from the introduction, the document explains that the original brief was intended to:

- establish a 2050 vision
- identify policy challenges and opportunities
- and recommend pathways for aligning planning policy with that vision.

The paper notes that discussions with the State Planning Commission led to an acknowledgement that: ***"the Character Preservation District Overlay does require change."***

Many of the issues consistently identified throughout the literature and now the Working Group discussions are effectively validated here:

- the Overlay may not be operating as effectively as originally intended.
- there are gaps between legislation and implementation; and
- the transition into the Planning and Design Code appears to have created gaps between strategic intent and practical implementation

The paper then becomes less about defining values and more about: *repairing the system.*

One of the strongest recurring themes through this document is integration. It repeatedly stresses that:

- the Overlay cannot be looked at in isolation
- planning policy needs to work across Zones, Overlays and broader Code structure
- and collaboration between Councils and State Government is critical.

The "Vision" section is interesting because it openly admits the Vision had never really found a formal home within the Code structure. That aligns very strongly with what the Working Group has been discussing recently:

- the limited of clarity
- inconsistency in interpretation
- and planners/applicants not understanding what "good" looks like.

The paper even suggests there may be merit in embedding Vision statements directly into the Overlay or Code itself to provide clearer direction.

The community engagement section also stands out because it directly acknowledges consultation fatigue.

As the paper moves into the recommended strategic directions, it becomes much more specific and technical. One of the biggest recommendations is to split the Character Preservation District Overlay into:

- a Barossa Overlay
- and a McLaren Vale Overlay.

That reflects a recurring concern throughout the literature that: the regions are fundamentally different landscapes, economies, and settlement patterns, yet are currently being regulated under largely shared overlay logic.

The paper repeatedly pushes for:

- more specificity,
- more local tailoring,
- and clearer definitions.

A huge amount of attention is given to:

- value-adding
- tourism
- hospitality
- and rural development pressures.

The paper openly recommends:

- clearer location-based guidance
- differentiation between tourism scales
- and potentially restricting larger-scale tourism to designated tourism areas.

This is one of the strongest examples so far of the literature acknowledging: ***the issue is not tourism itself, but scale, fit, and context.***

Another major theme is the concern around rural dwellings and fragmentation of productive land.

The document pushes for:

- stronger dwelling controls
- clearer links between dwellings and primary production
- farm management plans
- and reinstating intent around minimum lot sizes.

One of the strongest recurring concerns identified in the paper is around changes to previous policy mechanisms during transition into the new Code.

The document repeatedly calls for:

- reinstatement of separation distances
- better buffer policies
- stronger interface management
- and recognition that productive industries need protection from incompatible neighbours.

Again, this is not framed as anti-development. It is framed as: ***protecting long-term viability of the region's productive base.***

The "Thinking and Planning for the Future" section becomes broader again and starts moving back toward strategic regional thinking.

This section strongly argues that future planning:

- cannot just focus on selected townships
- needs to consider the whole region
- and must include detailed land supply analysis for all settlements.

It also raises uncertainty around how the Barossa fits within Greater Adelaide regional planning processes.

The Summary Report section becomes particularly useful because it simplifies many of the strategic concerns into clearer language.

One of the most important passages is probably: the project was initiated because of:
**"perceived gaps between the intent of character preservation legislation introduced in 2013 and new planning policies and processes introduced through the State Government's planning reforms."**

The draft vision section starts combining:

- preservation
- economic resilience
- climate adaptation
- energy transition
- regenerative agriculture
- and community cohesion.

It also starts talking more directly about:

- climate change
- water security
- regenerative agriculture
- sustainable production
- and changing consumer patterns.

The final pages are probably the clearest summary yet of where the policy gaps are perceived to exist:

- Overlay too general
- limited attention to scale and built form
- lack of clarity around appropriate/inappropriate development
- missing translation of planning strategy policies
- limited tourism definitions
- inadequate interface controls
- and loss of winery-specific protections.

# Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area

## Update report including response to character related submissions received during concurrent Barossa Growth and Investment Strategy Issues Paper and Character Consultation

6 December 2023
Paul Mickan, Consultant

The previous document was largely diagnosing the problems in the planning system. This one is more focused on consolidating community feedback, refining strategic directions, and translating those issues into actual implementation pathways and Code Amendment recommendations.

Right from the introduction, the document confirms that the earlier 2022 review had already gained some traction with the State Planning Commission. The important shift here is that the Commission had apparently provided "in principle support" to amending the Character Preservation District Overlay.

The next section explains that this report sits alongside the broader *Barossa Growth and Infrastructure Investment Strategy* work being undertaken by URPS in 2023. What becomes immediately clear is that this document is trying to bridge two conversations simultaneously:

- growth and investment
- and preservation and character.

The report then explains that community engagement was undertaken across:

- township growth
- infrastructure
- housing
- and preserving Barossa character.

This report is not presenting entirely new ideas. Instead, it is testing whether the community feedback aligns with the strategic gaps already identified in the earlier character review work.

As the document moves into the consultation findings, several themes emerge very consistently. One of the strongest recurring themes is overwhelming support for the Character Preservation District itself. The report notes that most respondents considered the CPD critical to protecting:

- heritage
- agricultural land
- rural landscapes
- township identity
- and scenic character.

Again, the feedback is not anti-development in a blanket sense, but rather a consideration of:

- scale
- intensity
- and relationship to agriculture.

The community appears broadly supportive of:

- small-scale tourism
- cellar doors
- wineries
- and low-impact ancillary uses

but strongly opposed to:

- large-scale tourism developments
- major hotels
- oversized function centres
- and suburban-style expansion.

Housing feedback follows a similar pattern.

There is general support for:

- infill
- higher density in appropriate locations
- and growth within existing townships

but concern about:

- suburbanisation
- township sprawl
- and losing distinction between settlements.

Again, this reinforces something that keeps surfacing throughout the literature:
***people are not necessarily resisting growth itself, but they are resisting growth that feels generic, metropolitan, or disconnected from place.***

The next section moves deeper into township identity and built form. It refers back to the Planning Strategy Addendum policies and highlights several recurring objectives:

- maintaining separation between towns
- preserving individual township identity
- avoiding homogeneous suburban subdivisions
- reinforcing low-scale development at town edges
- and locating higher density within township centres rather than edges.

Stakeholder concern was also raised regarding the Planning and Design Code's ability to meaningfully express 'desired future character'. The report repeatedly references older Development Plans which included detailed desired character statements describing:

- how places should evolve
- what scale was appropriate
- and what future identity should look like.

Stakeholder concern has centred around whether the current Code framework provides sufficient local specificity and is too performance-based to properly articulate those finer-grain local distinctions.

That becomes an important shift in thinking: *the issue is no longer simply "protection".*
It is increasingly about whether the planning system can describe and guide nuanced future character outcomes.

The report then begins talking about the "four-tier" structure of Character Preservation:

1. the Act
2. State Planning Policies
3. the Planning Strategy Addendum
4. the Planning and Design Code Overlay.

The report raises concern that the Planning Addendum itself may effectively disappear or lose influence through the new Greater Adelaide Regional Plan structure. Concern is that much of the detailed character thinking could be diluted if it is not explicitly embedded into future planning instruments.

The tourism and land use section then starts refining concerns raised in the earlier 2022 review. The same themes continue:

- uncertain clarity around "small scale"
- not fully articulated control over tourism intensity
- uncertainty around what "ancillary" means
- and concern that tourism uses could incrementally erode productive land.

One of the stronger ideas raised here is that: if dwellings are restricted on certain rural allotments,
then perhaps commercial tourism uses should also be subject to similar minimum allotment expectations.

The rural dwellings section continues many of the concerns from the earlier paper. Rather than strongly pushing Restricted Development pathways, the report appears to favour:

- stronger overlays
- clearer justification requirements
- stronger links to primary production
- and more robust assessment criteria.

Bethany and Krondorf discussion:

The report highlights inconsistencies where these settlements are effectively treated as rural areas under the legislation, despite functioning as townships. This has created conflicts between subdivision policies, rural settlement zoning and Character Preservation legislation.

This section reinforces another recurring theme: ***the system currently contains numerous technical inconsistencies and anomalies that create confusion and undermine the intended planning outcomes.***

Extractive industries section - unlike earlier papers heavily focused on tourism and housing, this report acknowledges the long-standing role of quarrying and mineral extraction within the Barossa economy and suggests future growth strategies need to recognise those industries as well.

The recommendations become highly detailed and practical, covering:

- splitting the Character Preservation Overlay into separate Barossa and McLaren Vale overlays
- introducing township character statements
- integrating the Barossa Directions Inset Map
- defining "small-scale"
- strengthening design guidance
- protecting scenic lookouts
- refining tourism policies
- and strengthening interface controls.

There is also a stronger emphasis here on:

- design review
- built form guidance
- diagrams
- local design standards
- and potentially a Barossa Design Charter.

This document starts recognising that character is not only protected through land use controls, but through design quality and clarity of expectations.

The focus becomes:

- who leads the amendments
- what needs changing
- where policy gaps exist
- and how different layers of the planning system need to better align.

# 02. References

## Core Documents

| Year | Document Title | Author / Source | Pages | Geography | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013 | Barossa Character Values Community Engagement Report | URS Australia for Barossa Valley District Councils | 69 | Barossa Valley District / multiple LGAs | Community Engagement |
| 2013 | Character Preservation – Character Values Policy Statements | Barossa Council | 8 | Character Area | |
| 2013 | Planning Strategy Addendum / Character Preservation Policy Statements | Government of South Australia / DPTI | 20 | Barossa Character Preservation District | Policy |
| 2022 | Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area – Document Review | Paul Mickan, Consultant | 65 | Character Area | Document Review |
| 2022 | Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area - Discussion Paper for State Planning Commission | Paul Mickan, Consultant | 36 | Character Area | Discussion Paper |
| 2022 | Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area – Strategic Directions Paper | Paul Mickan, Consultant | 15 | Character Area | Discussion Paper |
| 2023 | Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area - Update | Paul Mickan, Consultant | 17 | Character Area | Discussion Paper |

**Additional & Supporting Documents**

| Year | Document Title | Author / Source | Pages | Geography | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1993 | Barossa Valley Region Strategy Plan | State / Barossa Valley Review Steering Committee | 150 | Regional | Strategy |
| 2004 | Wine Industry Impact Review | Barossa & Light Regional Development Board | 51 | Regional / GI | Economic Report |
| 2005 | Barossa and Light Region Landscape Assessment Study | Dr Andrew Lothian / Scenic Solutions | 66 | Regional | Landscape |
| | Barossa Winemakers Design Charter | Planning Advisory Services / Michael Wohlstadt | 16 | Winery / Regional | Design Guidance |
| 2011 | Can We Have It All? / Peri-urban. Forum material | RDA Barossa / Anne Moroney | 1+ | Regional / periurban | Forum / Invitation |
| 2009/ 2011 | RDA Seppeltsfield Gathering Mind Maps | RDA Barossa / Seppeltsfield gathering participants | - | Regional / Barossa | Community Workshop Output |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2011 | Barossa Product Observation Audit | AEC Group / Dept. of Resources, Energy & Tourism / SATC / Tourism Barossa | 227 | Barossa Tourism Region / GI including Gawler | Tourism Audit |
| 2012 | Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 | Government of South Australia | 8 | Character Preservation District | Legislation - Act |
| 2019 | Barossa Wine & Its Ecosystem | Regional Development Australia Barossa | | Regional / GI | Economic Report |
| 2019 | Aspects of Tourism and Food | Barossa Australia / partners | | Regional | Tourism / Food |
| 2019 | Think Tank Barossa: Moving from 'or' to 'and' | Barossa / RDA / Laura Lee / Claire Parkinson | 12 | Regional | Think Tank Summary |
| 2019 | Strategic Voice / Barossa Australia's Strategic Voice documents | Barossa Australia / partners | | Regional | Strategy / Governance |
| 2021 | Barossa Regional Profile – Annual Visitor Summary YE Dec 2021 | South Australian Tourism Commission | 7 | Barossa Valley | Tourism Profile |
| 2022 | Barossa Water Security Strategy 2050 | Barossa Australia / partners | 21 | Barossa Valley and Eden Valley | Water Strategy |
| 2022 | South Australia Tourism Investment Brochure | South Australian Tourism Commission | 23 | South Australia | Tourism Investment Brochure |
| 2023 | Strategic Planning Review of the Barossa Character Area – Update report including submissions | Paul Mickan, Consultant | | Character Area | Update Report |
| 2023 | Barossa Growth and Infrastructure Investment Strategy consultation material | The Barossa Council / URPS / community | | The Barossa Council area | Consultation / Strategy |
| 2023 | Character and Growth raw survey responses / appendices | Council / community respondents | | Cross-region | Raw Consultation Evidence |
| 2024/ 2025 | Recent Barossa Basin / water consultation with farmers | State Government / water resources / stakeholders | | Barossa Basin / agricultural areas | Consultation / Water |
| 2024/ 2025 | Destination Management Plan / current tourism destination work | SATC / Barossa Australia | | Barossa / SA tourism region | Tourism Strategy |
| 2026 | Latest SA Planning and Design Code | Government of South Australia / PlanSA | | Statewide / South Australia | Planning Code |
| | Heritage Trail Map / Barossa Regional Heritage Trails | Barossa Council / tourism partners | Map | Regional | Heritage / Tourism Map |

**EIW Architects**

**Adelaide**
**U1/45 Gilbert Street**
**Adelaide SA 5000**
**+61 4 2265 8202**

**Perth, Australia**
L12, 109 St Georges Tce
Perth WA 6000
+61 8 9484 4700

hello@eiwarch.com.au
www.eiwarch.com.au

**Susan Powell**

Architect, M.Arch
EIW Principal
Adelaide

susan@eiwarch.com.au

**Chloe Summers**

Architect, M.Arch
EIW Director
Perth & Adelaide

chloe@eiwarch.com.au

**Laura Lee**

Architect, Hon FRAIA
Professor
Belgium & Italy

llee@cmu.edu

**Stevie Summers**

Senior Designer, MVisArtDes(Graph)
Stuart Pettigrew Design
Melbourne & Gold Coast

stevie@spdesign.com.au

**Laura Lee +**

eiw